The Marigold Horse

AND OTHER STORIES

By

MARGARET R. SEEBACH

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY
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FOREWORD

In all ages the world has followed the lure of "Once upon a time".

The Master Teacher of men began some of his greatest lessons with,

"There was once a man—"
"A certain ruler—"

"He spake unto" them in parables. In other words he told them stories. Kate Douglas Wiggin said she would rather be the children's story teller than the queen's favorite or the king's counsellor.

Mrs. Seebach has told missionary stories to children and written missionary stories for children for many years, in an especially delightful way.

Now she has gathered into this volume many of the stories that have delighted and interested the boys and girls who read *Lutheran Woman's Work* and *Everyland*.

"Give us a book of stories" has been the plea. "The Marigold Horse" is the charming answer.

KATHARINE SCHERER-CRONK.

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THE MARIGOLD HORSE

"What in the world is the matter in this village?" inquired the Doctor Sahib, checking the speed of his Ford on the outskirts of one of those little hamlets that are dotted all over the great country of India. "I never saw so many people moving about in it at once, or moving so fast."

"I think, Sahib," said Chunder John, the doctor's assistant, "there must be something very much wrong in this town, I hear women crying, and look! There goes Ratnam, the school teacher, running as fast as his legs can go!"

"Come on!" said the doctor, giving the Ford more gas. "It looks as though we were needed in there."

Suddenly he swerved to the right and stopped the little car with a jerk beside the village well. A boy with his arms full of trailing green and gold was rushing toward the well.

"What are you going to do with that stuff, Devadas?" he asked sharply. The boy looked up in alarm, and stopped with his armful half over the curb of the well.

"Throw it into the well, Sahib!" he stammered.

"Have you thrown any more down?" inquired the doctor sternly.

"Some, Sahib," said Devadas, beginning to shuffle his feet in the dust.

"Well, stop it!" said the missionary doctor severely, dismounting from the Ford and peering into the well. "I should say there is some in there! You've put in enough to poison the water for the whole village, if somebody

doesn't take it out. What madness has struck you, and what are the women screaming about?"

Devadas began to sniff as a crowd of excited men, women and children gathered about the well.

"Here comes Ratnam," said the doctor in relief. "Now we shall be able to talk sense. Ratnam," he demanded, as the teacher approached, "what is all this disturbance about? Have the people of this village lost their minds?"

"Alas, yes, Doctor Sahib," said the panting Ratnam. "Since early dawn I have been going from house to house, trying to stop their madness, but they will not listen to me. It is well that you have come!"

"Get your breath, man," said the doctor, "and tell us what it is all about."

Before Ratnam could obey, the crowd which was now pushing and jostling about the well broke into speech.

"The sickness, Doctor Sahib, the terrible new sickness!"

"The gods are angry, as they were when the smallpox came!"

"But this is a new kind of plague, Doctor Sahib; nobody ever saw its like before!"

"Veeramma is sick, and Kanthamma, and Krupanandam's son, and even your own cousin, Chunder John!"

"Well, well," said the doctor, making himself heard at last, "what has all this to do with throwing tons of marigolds down the well? Do you think you can cure the sick people by poisoning all the rest?"

Again the hubbub broke out.

"It is a new goddess this time, for the new disease; we do not know her name, but we call her the Flower Goddess."

"It is the goddess of the marigolds who is angry; we are quite sure of that."

"We are tearing up all the marigolds in the town and destroying them."

"Now, now, I can't hear you all at once," protested the doctor. "Ratnam, suppose you tell me about it, and all the rest keep quiet."

"You see, Doctor Sahib," began the teacher, "there is a great and strange new sickness going about the villages."

"Yes, I know," said the doctor. "Relapsing fever we call it for want of a better name. But go on."

"The people," pursued Ratnam, "are always looking out for some god that is angry when such things happen, as you know, Sahib. They are still very ignorant," he added apologetically. "I am not able to teach them very much at a time. So they got a notion from a man who came from the next village that the marigolds were to blame for the sickness, and that it was the Flower Goddess who was angry."

"But why in the world——" began the doctor; then the chorus broke out again.

"The man said that in his village a man had been going through a field where marigolds grew, and that all of a sudden he fell down dead!"

"A little girl, he said, picked some marigolds and was carrying them home. Somebody asked her for them, and she refused; when she got home, she too fell over dead!"

"At night the goddess comes like an old woman and knocks at the doors. If anyone is foolish enough to say 'Who is there?' he gets the fever."

"We are going to clean all the marigolds out of the town; then the goddess will go away."

The doctor looked up and down the straggling village street. Sure enough, the houses were stripped bare of the marigolds that usually flaunted in every doorway or hung in garlands over the doors or about the people's necks. He could scarcely imagine an Indian village without its marigolds; but torn and trampled earth, as well as the mass of yellow blossoms in the well, showed that

the people were ready to sacrifice their beloved flowers to their dread of the sickness.

"Foolish people!" he said, "how often must I tell you that sickness does not come from such things, but from dirt and bad food and polluted water? The marigolds will do more harm if you leave them in the well than they could ever have done if you had let them grow. Have you torn them all up?"

"Oh, no, Sahib, we had just begun!"

"That's better!" said the doctor. "Now, you fish them all out of this well, let them dry in the sun, and burn them if you will, but not another flower goes into this water! And show me where the sick ones are; I'll attend to them. Why in the world, if you were sick, didn't you send over to the hospital and get help?"

Again the excitement broke loose, worse than ever.

"The sickness has taken the Doctor Sahiba herself!"

"They have closed the hospital and taken her to Guntur. She lay like death, and knew nobody."

"She had been in a village where the fever was very bad, trying to cure the people, and the goddess caught her!"

"What are doctors, when the goddess is so angry?"

The doctor bit his lip. Things were getting serious, if the only doctor at the mission hospital in the neighboring city was stricken and had to be removed to the main hospital. The panic of the villagers was rising again, when Chunder John plucked him by the sleeve.

"Doctor Sahib," he whispered, drawing him aside, "give me permission to deal with these people, while you go to see the sick ones. I have a plan that will make them see their foolishness."

"They will mob you, John!" objected the doctor. "They are getting out of all reason. See, some of them are tearing off already to get more marigolds!"

"No, Sahib, I know these people!" said Chunder John. "Are they not my own people? I know how their thoughts go. Let me try, Doctor Sahib!"

"All right, John!" said the doctor, hurrying off to find the sick.

As he went, he heard Chunder John saying with decision, "You, Ratnam, stay by this well and let not another flower be thrown into it. Call your schoolboys—they will help you to keep the crowd away. Now, all of you go back to your houses and help me pull marigolds. In an hour I will show you a grand *tamasha,* and you will all laugh instead of howling like this, and the fever will go away from the village."

The town became almost as quiet as usual for the next hour, and the doctor had the pleasure of finding his patients more frightened than seriously sick. As he was leaving the last house, he heard a noise of drums and various musical instruments. Then an odd procession came along.

First came the pupils of the boys' school, playing a large variety of tunes all at once. Then appeared Chunder John, leading the strangest object the doctor had ever seen.

Out in a field near the village John had found an aged horse at his breakfast. He had taken all the remaining marigolds, which the people had gladly torn up for him, and garlanded the old horse with them from head to tail. Only the wise old white face, looking out of the mass of blossoms, told what kind of animal it was. The horse had evidently no fear of the marigolds, for he nipped off one and another as he was led along, munching them with visible pleasure.

After him came the village people, smiling broadly. Their panic was over, and they were having a glorious time.

As they met the doctor the parade broke into cries of explanation.

"He has made a marigold horse!"

"All the flowers are on the horse, and it will carry the curse away from our doors!"

"Chunder John says that if the marigolds do not kill the horse, we must believe that they do not make the sickness. He has prayed to *Yesu Christu,* and says his God will keep us safe if we clean up our houses and pray to be kept from harm."

"He says his God is stronger than the Flower Goddess, and we need not be afraid of her!"

Over this queer mixture of Christian and Hindu beliefs the doctor smiled to himself, but was much relieved at the consequences. As they left the town in the little Ford, he said to his helper, "You took a big chance, John, risking everything on that old bag of bones! He might have dropped over any minute, for all you knew!"

Then he felt a sense of rebuke, as John looked at him in surprise.

"But surely, Sahib, so great a God as ours could easily do so small a thing as to keep an old horse alive a little longer, to save a whole village! Had I not prayed?"

—*Courtesy of Everyland.*

"There, now, you will do very well until I come again," said the missionary doctor, giving a final pat of friendly encouragement to the bandage he had just wound about his patient's sore arm. He closed his medicine case with a click, handed a bit of sweet chocolate to the round-eyed child who had watched him from a corner, and plunged out of the dimness of the little native house into the brilliant sunshine of a cloudless morning in Abyssinia.

Outside, in the shadow of a tree, waited the friend from America who had paused on his leisurely tour of the world to visit his old classmate in the African mission.

"Through with your visits now?" inquired Mr. Archer, as the doctor burst out and took up his usual steady stride along the crooked street.

"Are you tired?" inquired the doctor, checking his pace and looking around at his friend.

"Not particularly," said Mr. Archer. "It's not exactly lively, sitting out here watching the shadows of the leaves flickering across the empty street. Where in the world are all the people this morning? Usually the streets are full of them; but since I've been waiting here I've seen only one old woman and a crippled boy."

"It does seem wonderfully quiet," said the doctor, struck for the first time by the stillness. "I was too busy to notice it before, but I believe you're right. Something must have taken the people out of the village. I recall now that in the houses I visited I saw nobody but my patients and the smallest children.

"Well, if you're not tired, and the walking isn't too much for you, there's one more place I ought to go. It's

down along the river road, and you'll at least have a change of scenery."

"Lead on!" said his friend, trying to match the doctor's rapid pace. "If you can do it, I can. Perhaps we'll see something alive down there. This deserted town is getting on my nerves."

Along the river road the walking was bad, and the two men were kept busy hunting the smoother places.

"What abominable roads they have here!" said the visitor after skinning the toe of his shoe on a stone hidden in the dust. "I suppose you couldn't get these people to do a day's work at road making if you promised them a fortune."

"They are bad roads," admitted the doctor, "but nothing now to what they will be in the rainy season. They are mended—poorly—once in a long while, but this one hasn't been touched for years. It's a good bit traveled, too; but the Abyssinian has tough soles and doesn't seem to mind what he walks on as long as it is dry. When the rains come, though, this will be one big swamp, and anyone who tries to travel it will get stuck in the mud."

I hear a noise!" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Archer. "It sounds like a sort of singing."

"It is singing, or chanting, rather," said the doctor listening. "A lot of voices, too! They are coming nearer. I expect we're going to find out the reason for our deserted village back yonder."

The chanting grew louder and louder. Around a turn in the road in front of the two men there soon appeared the head of an irregular column of marching people. Men, women, and all the larger boys and girls of the village, and others from neighboring towns, all came trooping along the rough road, singing one of those weird chants that have been sung since the beginning of time by the

African on those rare occasions when he has been actually doing hard work.

"Why, there must be thousands of them!" declared Mr. Archer, climbing on a large rock by the wayside to watch them pass. "Look! they're all carrying stones, big and little. Who's the man on horseback, in the middle of the crowd?"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the doctor as the rider drew near. "Open your eyes wide, Archer! You'll never see a sight like this again. Who do you think that man on horseback is?"

"Some big chief, by the gold on him and his horse," said his friend.

"It's Ras Tafari himself, Archer! The king! Do you hear? The king of Abyssinia, of the longest royal line on earth, successor to Menelik, who claimed to be descended from the Queen of Sheba! Will you look at the big stone on his saddle-bow? Hold on a minute!"

He dashed out into the crowd and caught hold of a man, chattering with him vigorously for a few moments in the native tongue.

"It's true," he said, coming back to his friend. "King Ras Tafari said to his counselors, 'The roads in my kingdom are very bad; they must be mended.' They said to him, 'Yes, your Majesty, but how are we going to get it done?' He said, 'Mended they shall be, and before the rainy season begins!' 'Oh, sire,' said they—or something like that—'the people will never work hard enough to get them mended by that time!' 'Then I will have to do it myself,' said Ras Tafari.

"So here he is on his horse, showing his people how to make roads. He sent word about through all these villages that they were to be ready today to help him. He rode down with them to the river-bed, and with his own hands

he helped to lift that big stone to his saddle. Every one of them, man, woman and child, was willing to do what the king did, of course."

"Good for him!" said Mr. Archer. "He's a real king, and there aren't many of them in the world."

"It's a wonderful thing for Abyssinia," said the doctor, bowing deeply as Ras Tafari passed them with a genial nod. "He is teaching them not to be ashamed of honest work, and to labor all together for the public good. Not to mention," he added with a smile as the last of the chanting procession swept by, "that we'll have better roads, so that a missionary doctor can get to see his patients in all kinds of weather!"

A CHRISTMAS TREE THAT PREACHED

"If there were only a preacher here!" said Hiro Toyama to his young wife as they arranged the wares in their little shop.

Hiro and his wife Etsu had just moved to a new part of the city, to set up their business. There was a good opening here for a store; but the great drawback, and one which had made them hesitate long before deciding to move, was that in all that section of the city there was not a Christian church.

The Toyamas had both come of Christian families, and it was very hard for them to move so far from the church where all their friends worshiped, and where both of them had made their own pledges of loyalty to the Lord Jesus.

"We can go back to our church on Sunday, even if it is a long way," said Etsu hopefully.

"Yes, we can go back, but that is not what I meant," said her husband. "Think, Etsu! All around us here there are thousands of Japanese people who know nothing at all about Jesus. They could be taught, just as we and our parents have been; but where is the teacher or the preacher to tell them about Him? Just like them we should be, worshiping Buddha and the Shinto gods, if the missionaries had not come to our part of the city. My heart aches for them."

"It is true," said Etsu. "Yesterday I saw a Buddhist temple car go by, and all the people bowed down to it as it passed. I did not see one person on the street who did not bow. But what can we do? We are but two among so many!"

"That is why I wished for a preacher to come here,"

said Hiro. "I talked to our preacher about it, but he said there was not money enough to send another man and start a mission here. The people in America must be very poor—poorer than we are in Japan, since they cannot send one more man for such a great city as this!"

"No doubt they are poor since the Great War," said the gentle Etsu. "You know we saw in the papers how many millions they paid to send their soldiers to fight. But, Hiro, we are Christians too; and this is our country, and these are our own people. Can we not do something ourselves to help them?"

"I have been thinking very hard about that," said Hiro. "One thing we will do that will be a witness to them that we worship the Christians' God; we will always keep the store closed on Sunday."

"Of course," said Etsu. "But how can we show them what we mean by it? Could we start a little Sunday school for some of the children?"

"We shall have to be very careful at first," said Hiro, shaking his head. "If we seem to be trying to force our religion on anyone, they will not come near us, and the priests will tell them to drive us out. We must make it that they will come to us; then nobody can blame us if we tell them about our religion, when they come and ask us."

"How can we make them come?" mused Etsu. "Never mind, we will find a way."

The weeks went on, and the little store prospered. The modest, friendly young couple were winning favor among all their neighbors. But no one seemed interested about their religion. Even the fact that they closed the store and went away one day each week excited little comment.

"They go to pay their respects to their honorable parents, who live in another part of the city," was the way

the neighbors explained it. "They are certainly very good children."

One evening in December, when they had just come home after a Sunday among their friends, Etsu, who had been humming a Christmas carol, suddenly clapped her hands and cried out,

"I have it, Hiro!"

"Have what?" said her husband, trying to light the charcoal in the little brazier that warmed the room, and stopping to blow on his numb fingers. "It is surely cold tonight! What have you, Etsu?"

"The way to make people ask questions," she said. "Look, Hiro! We have a beautiful shop window to show our goods, have we not? Well, why do we not make it show something for our Lord's business, now that His birthday is coming soon?"

"Tell me what you mean, Etsu," said Hiro, beginning to be interested.

"I mean this," said Etsu. "We will get a little tree and trim it like the big one they have at church, with all colors of pretty balls and stars, and gold and silver tinsel. And we will light it with candles and put it in our shop window; and when anybody says, 'Why do you light candles on the little tree?' we will say, 'It is to celebrate the birthday of the Lord Jesus.' Then they will say, 'Who is He?' and we can tell them the story!"

"You are right, Etsu," said Hiro. "That is a good thought. We will buy the balls and the tinsel and the candles tomorrow, and make the tree so bright that people cannot help seeing it. Let us get a few small Japanese Testaments, too; then if any seem interested we can give them one to read about it for themselves."

In a few days people began to stop at the little window to look at the Christmas tree, which glittered bravely all day in the sunlight and shone at night with many candles.

At first it was the children who ventured in to ask what it meant, but more and more grown people began to come.

To all of them Hiro and Etsu told simply the story of the Christ-child; and many of them went away thoughtful and earnest, with little Testaments in their hands. Hiro had to go back many times to the mission bookstore to get more copies.

"That young Toyama I told you about, who wanted a preacher sent to his part of the city," wrote home the superintendent of the mission a few months later, "has distributed so many Bibles, and has so many people asking to be taught, that we must certainly start a little chapel for them. Can't you increase our budget at least enough to rent a room and put a Japanese evangelist there?"

And the reply came back a little while later:

"We will!"

"But you are not going, my son!"

"Just this once, mother!" pleaded Matsu. "It will not hurt if I go just once. They are going to give gifts to all who come. Maybe I will get something nice."

"It is not the gift you are after, silly boy," scolded Mrs. Kimura. "It is to hear the false teachers that you want to go to the Jesus-house!"

"But, mother," said the boy, "it is good teaching that they have at the Jesus-house. You were angry at me when I went, and would not listen to what I tried to tell you; but they told about Jesus who came from heaven to save people from their sins."

"From their sins!" said his mother, with a bitter laugh. "Can this Jesus save your father from getting drunk?"

"Buddha cannot save him, at any rate," answered Matsu boldly. "The priests tell us that if we perform acts of self-sacrifice our prayers will be answered. You know well what I did to win the favor of Buddha—how I went out on a winter day, when the snow was driving on the wind; stripped off my clothing, and jumped into the icy water of the river, thirteen times in succession! Did Buddha care that I was almost frozen to death? No! My father still drinks, though I prayed for his reformation every time I jumped in."

"You are only a boy," said his mother, her tone softening in spite of her sternness. "How should the Lord Buddha listen to you? Perhaps, if we had been able to raise enough money to get the priests at the temple to pray for us——"

"Mother," cried the boy, "the priests themselves drink,

and offer liquor to the gods! How can gods and priests who drink help a man to stop getting drunk?"

"Hush, wicked boy!" cried his mother angrily. "You will bring a pestilence on our household by talking thus about the gods. Go to your tasks, and speak no more of such foolishness."

"And I may not go to the festival at the Jesus-house?" asked Matsu wistfully.

"No! And no! And again no!" screamed the angry woman. "If you go to the Jesus-house, today or ever again, you shall have the worst beating your father can give you, and you know that his hand is heavy. Let me hear no more about it!"

Matsu went dejectedly out of the house. A whole year had passed since he had first attended the mission service. That had been a day they called Christmas, and they told him it was the birthday of that good Jesus whom they worshiped. The prayer of the missionary to his God, so simple and fervent, and so different from the wailings of the priests at the temple, gave Matsu a strange feeling in his heart. The hymns the missionary sang to the music of the little organ stirred him deeply also. But when he came home, full of delight, and told his parents where he had been, they reproved him severely, and forbade him ever to go again to hear the Jesus teaching.

Now another Christmas time had come. Matsu had seen the mission-school pupils carrying flowers and evergreens into the little chapel for decorations; and as he passed by he had heard them joyfully practicing their Christmas hymns. They called to him and asked him to come to the celebration, promising him that there would be gifts for all.

"It means a beating if I go," said Matsu to himself, "but a beating will last only a few minutes, and the Jesus festival will last two whole hours. I think I will go; it

will be worth the beating. I must hear more about Jesus who saves people."

So Matsu went to the Christmas entertainment. He heard the beautiful singing, which brought the tears of joy to his eyes. He heard the missionary pray and preach, and learned still more about the power of Jesus to save. Finally came the distribution of gifts.

Each child was allowed to draw a package from a large pile as they marched by. When Matsu's turn came he drew a small package, round and hard. Quickly he opened it, and his face fell when he saw only his own likeness looking back at him from the little mirror he was holding in his hand.

"This is a girl's gift," he said. "What do I want of a looking-glass?"

"What is it, my boy?" said the Missionary, seeing Matsu approach him again.

"Sir," said the boy, bowing low, "I have brought back the honorable gift you kindly gave me. Perhaps some girl would be very glad to have it; but I am a boy and do not use such things."

"Well, well," said the kind teacher, "we did make a mistake, didn't we? What sort of a gift would you like in exchange?"

"Please," said Matsu, "I would like very much to have something to read—something about Jesus, of whom you told us."

"Good!" said the missionary, unusually pleased. He picked up a small leaflet printed in Japanese. It was an explanation of the verse, "God so loved the world."

"Here, my boy," said the good man, with a friendly hand on Matsu's shoulder, "is a better looking-glass for you! It is a mirror for the soul, and will show you not only your own heart, but the face of Jesus, the Saviour.

Read it carefully, and ask Him to help you understand it."

Matsu went home and took his beating like a man. When it was over he brought the precious leaflet and tried to read it aloud to his mother. She snatched it from his hands, tore it into bits and threw the pieces into the fire.

Matsu went no more to the Jesus-house; but for many days and weeks those wonderful words rang in his ears. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"—the teacher had said that meant Jesus. Often he tried to pray to this loving God, but felt that he needed to know much more about Him.

Years passed by, and Matsu was sent, by great economy and sacrifice on the part of his mother, to school in the capital city of his province. Here he was free to go and listen to what he pleased; and one day he heard a preacher tell the story of the prodigal son.

"It is the God who so loved the world that is the father in that story," he said. "Oh, I must not care what my father says—I must tell him this story!"

When he went home for his vacation to the little mountain village he insisted on telling his parents about Jesus, who was now his Master—for Matsu had become a Christian. They refused to listen, and treated him as if they thought him crazy.

"Very well," thought Matsu. "If I cannot tell them the gospel, I will try to live it here at home."

So he took up, with a smile, the heaviest and dirtiest work he could find to do about the house and the little shop. He answered his parents' harsh words with pleasant ones; he did everything they asked of him with ready cheerfulness. He never spoke to them of Jesus, but now and then they heard the name upon his lips as he sang joyful hymns about his work.

It was not long that they could hold out against this new teaching which had made their son so happy and helpful. He had presently the joy of taking both his parents to the Jesus-house, and of seeing them baptized. Then he began to lead his friends and fellow students to Jesus.

There is much more of the story than we have room to tell—how Matsu went to a Christian college, where he worked his way by getting up at half-past three on winter mornings to deliver milk, barefooted and without an overcoat, and selling newspapers later in the day. On Sundays he conducted a Sunday school among the poor of the city, where he washed the children's faces and combed the girls' hair before he sat down with them to teach them about Jesus.

At last he decided to come to America to study; and though his father called him foolish, he declared he would go if he had to swim the Pacific Ocean. It was his mother who gave all her little earnings and borrowed money to send her son to America.

The sacrifice was well worth while; for Matsu is today Rev. Seimatsu Kimura, the great evangelist of Japan, who has preached to more than a million of his people, and won forty thousand of them to look for the face of Jesus in the looking-glass of God's Word.

THE BOOK THAT WOULDN'T BE LOST

Maria Dolores was in dreadful trouble. The beads on her rosary clicked and clacked as she spun them through her busily praying fingers; but neither the "Our Fathers" nor the "Hail Marys" that she said brought her any new wisdom. What was she to do in this great difficulty?

It had been only a few weeks since the "Bible Man" had come for the first time into the little South American village where Maria Dolores lived. As soon as she saw him she knew he was a good man, for his face looked so kind and peaceful. Besides, he had patted Lolita and Tito on their glossy black heads, and told them such beautiful stories about a man called Iago, who dreamed about angels going up and down a ladder, and a little boy named Samuelito, who heard *el Señor Dios* talking to him in the night. The children had listened with all their ears and had jumped for joy when the man had offered to sell their mother a book that had both those stories in it, and many more.

Maria Dolores was rather proud of being able to read. Very few women in her village could do so; but Maria had been a rich lady's maid before Esteban had married her, and had learned to read from the governess who taught the lady's children.

Now they had come to live in this dirty little village, where there was work for Esteban on the building of the big brick plant near by, and where he hoped for steady work when the kilns were finished. Here she would forget all she ever knew, unless she could remember it by trying to teach Lolita and Tito. It might be all the teaching they would ever get, for there was no school in the village, and the big town was too far away to send them.

If Esteban had been at home Maria would probably not have bought the book; for he always laughed at the idea of anything to read. What was the use of it, anyway? Here was he, Esteban Jimeñez, who had never learned to do more than write his own name; and he was making good money, and no need for any silly books! So Maria kept very quiet before him about her superior knowledge.

Besides, he had been out of sorts lately, for the foreman at the plant had been very cross, and nobody knew when he might get discharged, if the boss happened to feel like it.

"Oh, *madrecita,* buy us the book!" cried the children, dancing about; and Maria Dolores had gone to her little nest of savings and brought out the small sum the man asked.

She found her memory even more rusty than she had feared, and it took a long while to spell out the stories. But she read on, finding even more wonderful stories than those the man had told. There were many about the holy Apostles, Pedro and Juan and Paolo, and most of all about the Lord Jesus Himself; though, strange to say, there was not much about our Lady of Sorrows, for whom she was named—Maria Dolores.

This morning, after Lolita and Tito had helped her with her work—they were always willing to help now, so that *madrecita* would be sooner ready to read—a shadow fell across the page; and when they looked up, there was Don Carlos, the village priest, looking very tall and gloomy in his black robe, with a frown on his face.

"What are you reading, my children?" he asked.

"A book, father, that I got from the man who was selling them in the village," faltered Maria, suddenly feeling guilty without knowing why.

Don Carlos' face grew so black that the children were frightened and began to cry.

"Those books, foolish woman," he said in an angry voice, "are very bad books, not fit for you to read. It was very wrong of you to buy one, and as long as it stays in your house, misfortune will hang over your heads."

"But, father," said Maria in tears, "what shall I do? I did not know the book was bad, and I have bought it and read much of it to the children."

"Worse and worse!" exclaimed the priest. "This is what comes of teaching silly women to read! Burn the book this very day, and say your rosary fifty times every day for a week. I shall lay no heavier penance on you, because you sinned in ignorance; but never do such a thing again unless you want your man to lose his job, your house to burn down, and your children die of fever!"

He left them all sobbing in terror; but after he was gone Maria began to wonder what could be wrong about the book? Surely all the stories were good, and so many of them were about Jesus. Could she burn a book all printed through with His name and full of His words? All the while she told her beads she puzzled over this.

"I cannot burn the book," she said, "and I will not, no matter what Don Carlos says. I will keep it——" then she thought about the cross foreman, and Esteban's fear of losing his job. Suppose something happened and he found out what she had done, and blamed her?

No, the book must go, but not into the fire. She would lose it, just drop it somewhere away from the house. Then nobody could scold her for not burning it, and the curse would be removed from their roof.

That afternoon when the children were asleep, their faces still streaked with the tears they had shed because they were to hear no more stories, Maria Dolores went for

a walk beside the canal. When she came back, the small package she had started with was gone.

"Never mind," she said to the children. "I have read you the stories till you know most of them by heart. Maybe some day, when you are grown up, you can learn to read other stories out of other books. There must surely be some books that *el Señor Dios* will not punish people for reading."

About a week later Esteban came home looking much cheered.

"The boss," he told Maria, "is a different man the last three days. He hardly scolds at all, and today he let Pedro Nogales go home an hour earlier to his sick wife. When Pedro said he couldn't afford to lose the hour's pay, the boss told him he would pay him for the full time; and he gave him a paper, to get a bottle of medicine for her from the doctor!"

"What makes him different, do you think, Esteban?" asked Maria.

"I don't know," said her husband. "But whenever he sits down he reads from a little book he carries in his pocket. It is a very poor-looking book, all stained and wrinkled as if it had been in the water, but he reads it and looks more pleasant all the time. If a book can make a bad boss kind like that, maybe it isn't such a bad thing to know how to read."

Then Maria guessed what had happened. The little Bible had refused to be lost. She had thrown it into the canal, but the water had not drowned it. The canal ran down by a vineyard, which lay between it and the field where the clay was gathered for the bricks. There, sticking in the mud, it had caught the eye of the boss when he had walked over to inspect the field. All the rest had happened because he had begun to read the book and to follow its teachings.

"It was a good book, after all," thought Maria in triumph. But she never told Esteban or Don Carlos. Only she and the children told each other all the stories they could remember, so that they would never forget them. And when the Bible man comes again, there is going to be another book bought out of Maria's savings, and she will not even try to lose it!

THE PRICE OF A FISH

Li Chang was not a pleasant person to look at, as he stood guard over his barrow of fish in the crowded Chinese market place. There was a scowl on his face as he watched the jostling throngs, and his thoughts were no sweeter than his looks.

"The foreigners," said Li Chang to himself, "have spoiled our country. They come in and throw our goods about and say they are not fit to buy. Then they make a bargain that sounds good, but when they have bought and gone we find out they have cheated us. They hire us to work for them, and then they say the work is not done right and will not pay us our wages. They laugh at us when we pray, they scold us when we work, they abuse us when we try to fight! China is no place for the Chinese any more!"

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he had noticed with impartial dislike a party of American tourists, a British officer, the agent of a German shipping firm, an Italian opera-singer and a Russian sailor, all passing in that jumble of nationalities which may be seen any day on streets of Hong Kong. All these white people, it seemed to him, were there for just one purpose—to spoil China for the Chinese.

Then he saw that two foreign women had stopped by his barrow, and were looking at the fish.

"These are the best we have seen," said one of them in a crisp, pleasant tone that somehow made his scowl a little lighter.

"But such a cross-looking dealer!" said the other in a whisper. "Come on, Mercy, let's go back and get some of the others."

"But these are the largest and freshest," persisted the first. "The others we saw were not nearly so good. Perhaps the poor man has a headache, standing here in the hot sunshine? I'm going to ask him how much his fish are, anyway."

It was clear that the pleasant lady did not know much Chinese. But Li Chang knew enough English not only to have caught the most of what she had said, but to sell her the largest and finest of his fish. He was so much surprised that anybody should care whether his head ached or not that he fumbled in a dazed way with the small coins as he counted out her change, and did not notice that he had given her two coins too much.

Neither did the white lady notice it until she opened her purse at another stall farther down the street to purchase some cabbage. Then she counted her money all over, and started back again.

"Where in the world are you going now, Mercy?" called her companion.

"Just a minute, Edna!" she answered. "Wait there in the shade for me. I'll be right back."

Li Chang was still more dazed to see the pleasant face beside his barrow again, and to receive the two coins, with explanations in broken Chinese, helped out by several English words. He looked from her to the coins in his hand, and from the coins back to her vanishing form as she hurried off again, and rubbed his eyes in amazement. Who had ever heard of a foreigner, or anyone else for that matter, bringing back extra change? Now if she had come back to tell him he hadn't given her enough, it would be perfectly natural; but to bring some back when he hadn't even missed it—that was something nobody could believe. Yet there was the money in his hand!

Old Cho, selling shrimps beside him, smiled as he watched his perplexity. Li turned and caught the smile.

"Father Cho," he said, "tell me I am not having a dream. Did the foreign woman bring back this money, or not? And why did she do it?"

"You do not dream, my friend," said Cho, with smiles peeping from every wrinkle of his leathery old face.

"Do you know her? Who is she?" inquired Li, forgetting his own scowl altogether.

"She is the American teacher from the Jesus school for girls," said the old man.

"What made her do it?" insisted Li.

"That is the Jesus way," said old Cho very softly—so softly that Li had to bend over to catch his words through the noise of the market.

"What?" said he. "Do you mean to tell me that the Jesus people will not cheat a Chinese? Would she come back through all the crowd to bring me two coins, because her Jesus-god told her to?"

"I do mean it, my son," said Cho, and now his wrinkles did not laugh, but seemed rather to shine. "I have been to the Jesus-house myself, and I know what they teach. Yes, and they do it as well as teach it!"

"It is too much to believe!" said Li Chang slowly. "If it were some wise scholar, who had studied all his life the sayings of Kung-foo-tse (Confucius), he might come and say to me, 'A virtuous man will not rob the poor,' and give back my money. But a foreign woman——!"

Words failed him. Cho's shriveled old face shone more and more. He drew nearer to Li.

"Jesus Christ," he said, "was a far greater and better teacher than Kung-foo-tse. Both of them said, 'Do to others as you would have them do to you'; but Kung-foo-tse did not have the power to make his followers do as he taught, unless it might be some great scholar, as you said. But Jesus makes His people able to do these things, even the women and children. Come with me tomorrow

and hear about Him at the preaching house down by the school."

That was more than fifteen years ago, and old Cho has gone his way, with his shining face, to see the Master he had learned to love. But Li Chang—though that is not his real name—is now a Christian preacher who travels over a large district and holds service, every Sunday in three months, in a different church. Some of the churches used to be halls where the people once worshiped their ancestors, but now they are dedicated to the worship of the Christian God.

Li Chang often tells the story of how he came to know about the Jesus way.

"The Lord told His followers," he says, "to become fishers of men; and so it was with my white teacher. For that time the price of a fish was the price of a man, and she bought me for the service of the Lord Jesus. Now I am His fisherman in my turn."

And many are the souls he gathers in the net of his earnest words, to lay at the feet of his Master.

TARO AND THE MIKOSHI

In a narrow back street in the city of Tokyo a crowd of Japanese boys stood arguing noisily. There were big boys, almost young men, with loud voices and overbearing ways. There were schoolboys, carrying their books, hopping eagerly about, and trying to get a word in edgewise. There were small boys, with their narrow, dark eyes stretched as far open as they would go, keeping a safe distance on the edge of the group, many of them carrying babies strapped to their backs. The clamor of voices rose high, and began to sound angry.

"And who are you, Taro Ishimura, to refuse to carry the *mikoshi* with us any more?" demanded the biggest boy of the crowd threateningly. A slighter boy, the center of the group, raised his hand, and a hush fell for a moment on the noisy tongues as the boys crowded closer to hear his answer.

"The *mikoshi,* Kato San," he said pleasantly to the big bully, "is the shrine of a god, is it not, which the priests hire us to carry through the streets that the people may remember to worship?"

"Everybody knows that," growled Kato. "Answer what I asked you, impertinent one!"

Taro's head rose a trifle higher.

"I am answering you, Kato," he said steadily. "To carry the *mikoshi* is to serve one of the many gods of the temples, and to call people to worship him. When I prayed at the temples I thought this was right, and was glad to please the gods by doing it.

"But now all our family has listened to the Jesus-teaching, and we have all become Christians. I cannot help people to worship the gods any more, because I do not

believe in them. If I did this, I would be false to my religion. I cannot help any longer to carry the *mikoshi.*".

The clamor arose again, louder than ever. Kato started forward with clenched fists; but the slender figure in the dark blue kimono suddenly dashed at a thin place in the crowd, darted through, and disappeared down a neighboring alley which led to the back door of his home. Nobody tried to pursue; they were jammed too tightly in the narrow street, and the crowd closed in on itself again to take angry counsel.

"I never thought those hateful foreigners would get hold of our Taro," said one boy regretfully. "He was my best friend, but now I suppose my father will not let me go to his house any more."

"What is it that the Jesus people teach, Hiro?" asked another. "Why do they think they are too good to worship our gods?"

"I will tell you what they teach," bawled Kato, furious that his victim had escaped him. "They teach the words of a coward! They say that you must not fight, but that if some one hits you on one cheek, you must turn the other and let him hit you there. Wait till I catch that Taro! I will keep him turning his cheeks till his head is dizzy!"

"Listen, Kato San," spoke the softer voice of his boon companion, Mutsu. There was not much cleverness in Kato's big head; the boys said that Mutsu thought out most of his tricks for him, and in turn protected his weaker body behind Kato's strong arm. "We can do better than that. You know how often we have used the *mikoshi* itself to punish troublesome people. How easy it is when the whole crowd of us is pushing and shoving, as we carry the *mikoshi* through the streets, to make it hit somebody's house! And he whose house the *mikoshi* strikes—so the priests have always said—is one with whom the gods are

angry. It is right that he should be punished; and if the *mikoshi* should strike the house of the Ishimuras——"

"Good!" cried Kato, his heavy face aflame. "Come, let us go to the priest. Tonight we shall carry the *mikoshi* past Taro's house."

There was little concern in Taro's heart as he slipped into his home. Sooner or later he knew he would have to break with the crowd in the matter of carrying the idol shrine; and he was glad it was done, and a little exultant that he had not failed to speak out boldly at the critical moment. He ate his supper with the family, played a while with his younger brother and sister, who were throwing a ball in the door-yard, and then settled down to the lessons which must be prepared for next day.

He was so busy that he scarcely noticed the yelling of a gang of boys in the street or the tramping of many *geta* (wooden clogs), until there came a sudden crash against the corner of the house that made the frail building tremble and set the children screaming.

Mr. Ishimura started up and went to the door, Taro following, while the mother tried to quiet the frightened little ones. A glare of torches and a babble of loud voices rushed in as the door was opened.

"The gods are angry!" "The *mikoshi* struck the house!" "Some evil thing is hidden here!" "Some one has defied the gods!" "Let us tear the house down!" "Give us Taro, who despises the gods!"

Mr. Ishimura turned to his son. "What is it, Taro?" The boy quickly told him.

"Let me go out, father! I am the one they want. They will beat me, but they will not tear the house down or hurt the rest of you."

But his father pressed him back and stepped out before the angry mob. A stone flew from somewhere, and jeers and cries of "Christian!" drowned his voice. Kato had

lifted his stocky arm to fling a torch on the low roof, when a cry of warning stopped him. The police were coming.

The edges of the crowd began to melt away, but the brisk little policemen were on the spot before the ring-leaders could escape. Taro caught sight of a well-known face back of the police and cried joyfully to his father:

"Hiro, my friend, has brought the police. He would not see us harmed! He has stood by me against them all!"

In a moment more Kato and his followers were under arrest—all except the wily Mutsu, who had objections to standing by a friend in trouble. He slipped out of the crowd like an eel, and the policeman who had clutched at him found only a cap in his hand.

"This business of using the *mikoshi* to settle your private scores," said the police captain sternly, "is to stop at once. It has happened too often. If that is all your religion means to you, you would do better to pray to the gods less, and learn to keep the laws. Mr. Ishimura is a peaceable citizen, and he will be protected. Off you go to the judge, who will tell you what you must pay for the damage you have done to this man's house."

The rest of the crowd trooped off after the crestfallen Kato and his friends marching along between the police. But Hiro came shyly to lay his hand on his friend's shoulder and whisper, "Taro, I want to know what there is in the Jesus-teaching that makes people brave. Will you tell me about Him?"

WHEN THE DODO WALKED

John Wanji, the deacon of the little Christian church in the African village, walked slowly homeward with a clouded face. He had bad news to tell his family.

His wife, Sarah, and his daughters, Lois and Phoebe, all had been baptized with Christian names, and were faithful members of the little congregation. Now they were busy getting ready for the evening meal. The simple food—cakes made from pounded grain, with a dish of cooked greens—was just like that which was being served in many other huts throughout the village; but only in a Christian home, like this one, would all sit down and eat together, as John and his family presently did.

Sarah had noticed that her husband looked worried; but she was a wise woman and asked no questions, letting him eat his supper in silence and waiting till he should be ready to tell her what was the matter. Lois and Phoebe chattered about the new field that they had cleared, which was ready to be planted with cassava.

"It is for you, greedy girl," laughed Phoebe, the younger, "that we must plant another field. While you were away at the mission school the old field was enough; but now you are home, and we must plant more, so you will have plenty to eat."

"If we have too much cassava," said Lois, laughing good-naturedly, "we can sell some and send you, too, to the mission school. A big girl like you must learn to read better than I can teach you, and to do other things that the 'white mammies' teach. You may get more out of the cassava field than I do."

"You will not be able to plant your field," said their father, breaking his silence. "Not this week, or next, or maybe this season."

"Why not?" asked Sarah, alarmed.

"The word went out today," said John, "that the Dodo begins to walk tomorrow; and you know what that means."

A silence of dismay fell on the little family. They knew only too well what it meant. The Dodo was a scarecrow figure, supposed to be a spirit returned from the underworld, but really only a man dressed up to look frightful, which prowled about at times during the farming season. It was one of the many contrivances of the witch-doctor to keep the people in that state of fear and uneasiness which would make them come to buy his charms against evil spirits.

The Dodo was supposed to be particularly unfriendly to women. He would bring great troubles on any woman he met in the fields or on the path through the bush. So all women and girls were ordered to stay in their houses as long as the Dodo was walking about; for he might not only put a charm on the women he met, but even on the fields they were working in. Whenever the Dodo appeared all the women took to their houses like a flock of frightened sheep, and never dared to stir outside the village circuit until the witch-doctor graciously announced that the Dodo's visit was ended for that time.

As these visits usually came in the farming season and as all the work of planting and cultivating was done by women and children, it was often inconvenient to have them happen. If the witch-doctor was in need of extra gifts in the way of chickens, rice or cassava, the Dodo stayed long enough for the witch-doctor to lay in plentiful supplies before he withdrew—gifts which the desperate farmerettes gladly made to have the Dodo charmed away from their village.

Now the Dodo had come again, and Sarah and her daughters, as well as all the other women, were com-

manded to stay at home, no one knew for how long, while the new field lay ready for planting and the old one for tillage.

Suddenly Lois spoke up.

"Father," said she, "the Dodo is nothing to be afraid of."

John looked at her inquiringly.

"We are Christian people," explained Lois. "All of us are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. I do not believe the Dodo is a spirit at all; but even if he is one, did not the Lord tell the bad spirits to go away and not hurt His people?"

"Yes, child, yes," said her father.

"Then," said Lois, "why need we be afraid? If we go out and meet the Dodo will he not run away if we pray? Is it right for Christian women to hide as if they were afraid? Besides, we need to get our field planted if Phoebe is going to have her chance to go to school. Please let me go to the field tomorrow. I am not at all afraid!"

"I know the Dodo will not hurt you, daughter," answered her father slowly. "But the other people in the town who are not Christians will be very angry at us, and maybe they will catch you and beat you."

"If I am not afraid of spirits, I need not be afraid of people like ourselves," said Lois stoutly. "The Lord can take care of me, no matter who tries to hurt me."

Then Sarah spoke out.

"I have often felt ashamed," she said, "to sit hiding indoors because of the Dodo. It is not what a Christian should do. Let her go, John, and I will go with her. Perhaps some of the other Christian women will take courage, and we shall all be set free from this foolish custom."

"Let me go, too!" cried Phoebe; but her mother shook her head.

"Not you, little one. Stay here, and if any harm comes to us your father will have one to keep his house. But I am not afraid, for Lois is right; the Lord Jesus will take care of us, and we cannot be hurt by man or evil spirit."

It took much more talking to persuade John to let his wife and daughter go; but the next morning both of them started early for the field.

All day they worked busily, caring nothing for the heat of the sun. Once they heard the tinkling of the little bells the Dodo wears, off on a path in the bush, and once Lois thought she saw an ugly painted face glaring at them from behind the trees; but nobody interfered with them, and they came home in high spirits, with a good part of the planting done.

After a day or two several other Christian women came out to work on their own little patches; their husbands only laughed when the witch-doctor scolded, and said,

"Who can tell what a woman will do?"

Then the witch-doctor stirred up the heathen neighbors of these brave women, and they took the matter to the headman of the village. He summoned John and his family before him, and heard the witnesses, who told how the law of the Dodo had been broken.

The headman was very angry. He sentenced John to pay a heavy fine, and to be driven with his family from the village.

By this time all the Christians in the town were aroused.

"We will not let you be driven away," they said to John and Sarah. "We are not so many, but we are strong enough to fight this unjust sentence. Come, let us take this case to the head chief and see whether we can be driven about like cattle because we will not do what the witch-doctor tells us."

The head chief of the district was a Mohammedan and had no love for Christians. The heathen neighbors laughed when they heard that the case was to be taken to him.

But the leading men of the little church mustered so strong when the case was brought before him, and showed such tact and courage in representing to him that the witch-doctor, who had no real right to rule the village, was trying to make laws for them, and keeping the women from their work in order to get rich at their expense, that the chief—who was really a just man—gave his judgment in their favor.

"No man or woman belonging to a Christian household," was his decision, "can be compelled to hide when the Dodo is about. No one can be driven from his home because he will not obey the witch-doctor. The town is free for all to live in, to work their farms, and to follow their faith, whatever it is."

The Christians went home triumphant and held a service of thanksgiving in the little church.

"Do you not feel glad that we tried it?" said Lois to her mother as they went homeward.

"Yes," said Sarah, "the Lord not only took care of us, but He has set all of us free. Nobody will ever again try to make Christians obey the witch-doctor in our village; and in all the towns around the Christians will hear of it, and they, too, will be made bold to trust their Lord. Besides, many of our heathen neighbors have told me that they would like to know more about the God who makes His people not to be afraid of anything. You have done a great thing, little daughter."

And Lois answered softly, "Not I, mother, but the Lord Jesus!"

THE MAN WHO DIDN'T RUN AWAY FROM DIRT

Lolo was sitting in the sun. That was one of the few things he really cared about doing. There was pleasure in eating, of course; but no meal, however good, was complete without a long, dreamy lounge in the warm sunshine afterward.

Lolo was a man in years and in size, but his mind was smaller than that of the American child who starts to school for the first time. In the little African village there was nothing to feed the tiny mind in the big body—nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to do—except things he didn't want to do.

Just now, he was thinking about one of those things, which all the people in the village would have to do presently.

"Soon time to make new village," he thought lazily, and the thought disturbed the pleasant ease of his idleness. Making a new village was not an agreeable task, but it was the less of two evils.

The natives of that part of Africa where Lolo lived have a custom that would seem very strange to us. Whenever the filth in their villages—for they never clean anything up—becomes too bad to endure, they move to another place, clear new land and build another village. This happens about once in eighteen months.

If you had looked at Lolo, you would not have thought he was afraid of dirt, for there was plenty of it on him and about him. But Lolo, and every other African in his tribe, had this same habit; they would run away from dirt and leave it, rather than clean it up. As for what

was on themselves, another coat of grease would cover it up, and make them beautifully shiny again!

While Lolo sat lounging there, he saw a stranger coming up the path that led out of the bush. Usually the first person who sees a stranger calls out the whole village to look; but Lolo was too comfortable to move, and he watched the man idly. At first he thought it must be a white man, for he wore a great many more clothes than were the style in Lolo's village. But as the man drew nearer, Lolo saw that he was as black as himself. His curiosity began to stir.

"Black man, in white man's clothes. Um!" he remarked to himself.

There was another thing that had made him take the newcomer at first for a white man. He walked briskly along the narrow path, instead of idling along like a native.

"Him walk fast!" muttered Lolo. "What be after him?" But he could see neither wild animal nor troublesome white man on the stranger's footsteps, so he wondered more and more why he should walk so quickly—it seemed quick to Lolo—when he didn't have to do it.

On the very edge of the village stood a hut which nobody had entered for days. In it lay a poor woman in the clutch of that terrible disease, the African sleeping-sickness. With no one who cared enough to go near her, she was sleeping her life away in a filthy hut, among dirt and insects of every kind.

The buzzing of the flies about the hut attracted the stranger's notice as he passed it. He went to the low doorway and looked inside. If Lolo had not been too lazy he would have called and told him what was within; but he thought the man would soon enough find out for himself and hurry on his way.

"Him be gone in!" said Lolo suddenly, sitting erect

with something as near a start as his lazy muscles could produce. "What for he go in that dirty place? All him nice clean clothes be spoiled! Him foolish man!"

But the foolish man was coming out again. In his hand was an old gourd dipper. He laid down the little bundle he carried carefully beside the path. Then he took the gourd down to the stream that ran a little way beyond, and dipped some water in it. Coming back, he knelt beside his bundle and took from it a piece of white cloth. Then he entered the hut again, carrying the cloth and the water.

Lolo's curiosity got the better of his laziness. Rising with unusual quickness, he started over to where he could get a view inside the hut.

The strange man stood within looking around for a place to set the gourd down. Then he shook his head and turned to come out again. Lolo stepped behind a tree, for he did not want the stranger to see that he was watched. If he knew it he might stop doing those queer things, and Lolo wanted mightily to see what would happen next.

What did happen was this: The stranger set the gourd down again on the ground and hung the cloth on the limb of a tree. Then, breaking some branches, he proceeded to bind them together with long grass in the most approved form of an African broom.

In again he went, and presently Lolo saw him sweeping busily. How many kinds of dirt and vermin came out of that hut in the next quarter hour, it would be hard to count. The stranger was not content with sweeping them outside. He made a fire with some strange device that Lolo could not see, because the man's back was turned. In this he burned everything that would burn; then, digging the loose earth with a stick, he buried all that was left.

Lolo had never seen anything like this. But stranger things were to come. The man, taking off his "white men's shoes," and rolling up his duck trousers, carried gourd

after gourd of water, and with his broom—and another one which he made when that was worn out—he scrubbed the hard earthen floor of the hut with all his might. The heat dried it almost as soon as he was done.

"Now what happen?" Lolo asked himself; for the man had thrown away his broom and gone for more water.

Now the white cloth came down from the tree; the bundle came open again, and a queer little green cake of something came out of it, and went into the hut with the man, the water and the white cloth. Lolo had never seen soap in his life before.

The stranger bent over the rude earthen bed where the poor woman lay. Tenderly he bathed her unconscious face and her grimy hands. The swarms of flies were already leaving the hut, where the odor of filth was no longer to be enjoyed.

There were other things that came out of the bundle, but Lolo could not see what they all were. Something from a little black bottle was dropped into the woman's mouth, and the man stroked her throat gently until she swallowed it. Then he gathered his belongings and put them into the bundle again—all but the white cloth; that he left hanging on the tree to dry.

At last the man started on his way again, right up into the middle of Lolo's village. Lolo followed him at a safe distance.

One day, many months later, a missionary from the coast came into the interior, following the steps of the native Christian teacher who had gone that way to bring the good news of Jesus and His love.

At the little village where Lolo lived—which hadn't moved since then; it was cleaned up, instead—he found about sixty men and women waiting to be examined for baptism.

The leader was a very big and very black fellow who gave his native name as Lolo, but asked to be baptized under the name of Paul.

"What made you want to be a Christian?" asked the missionary when he examined this man.

Then Lolo told him all the story of the sick woman, the filthy hut, and the man who didn't run away from the dirt, but cleaned it up.

"Him take off shoes, roll up clothes, carry water, sweep, wash old woman's face, make her rest easy. Then him come up in town, talk about Jesus, say Him help people. Then I say, 'You good Jesus-man; do what Him do. This be true talk; this be good talk. Lolo be Jesus-man too.' " Lolo paused for a moment. Then he looked around the clean little village and waved his big hand.

" 'Deeds never die!' " he said. And that is an African proverb that is just as true in any other country in the world.

SADHU AND THE CHOLERA GODDESS

"Doctor Sahib," said Chunder Philip, the deacon, entering Doctor Field's office in the mission house early one morning, "I have to report that the boy Sadhu, the famine orphan, is gone."

"Gone, Philip?" said the doctor, looking up from his desk. "Where is he gone, and since when? He had his catechism lesson with you yesterday, had he not?"

"Yes, Doctor Sahib," said Philip, his dark face clouded with regret, "and he knew it every word. Truly, Sadhu was a bright and promising lad; but it is over now. His cousins, as you know, came to visit him last week. When he was left destitute by the famine none of them cared to have him, and they were glad enough to have the Doctor Sahib take him in. But of late they have come often to see him; and I think they have come by night and coaxed him away. His mat is on the veranda, but his extra coat and his Testament are gone. I fear we shall not see him again."

"It's too bad, Philip," said the doctor. "Sadhu had the making of a useful man in him, and I hoped he would become one of our teachers. But he was young, and no doubt his people promised him many things. At least he has the teaching you gave him, and his Testament. I am glad he took the Testament along."

Two years passed swiftly over the mission, and no word of Sadhu was received. The memory of him had almost faded from the mind of the busy missionary, when one day again Philip stood in the doorway. This time a smile brightened the brown face under the spotless white turban.

"Doctor Sahib, will you please come here and look?" said the deacon, leading the way to the veranda.

A group of perhaps fifty people, old and young, stood respectfully at a little distance. They were village people from one of the many little hamlets scattered about; their dusty garments showed that they had walked a considerable distance. They salaamed as the doctor appeared.

On the steps of the veranda stood a bright-eyed boy, who bowed low to the doctor. At the first glance Doctor Fields did not recognize him; then he exclaimed:

"Why, it's Sadhu!"

"Yes, Doctor Sahib," said Philip in great delight. "It is our runaway Sadhu. He has been reading his little Testament to the people in his village, and telling them what he learned here. Now he has brought them to ask for baptism. Will the Doctor Sahib be pleased to take the time to ask them some questions?"

Then Doctor Field, who was a physician of souls as well as of bodies, called the group to the veranda and for nearly an hour gave himself to examining them on what Sadhu had taught them.

"It's a little irregular, Philip," he finally said, "but I think we will take these people to the chapel and baptize them now. I never met any better prepared than they are; they seem to know the Testament almost from end to end, and they have answered every question I asked them, not only correctly but in an excellent spirit. It might be a long time before I would be able to get to their village, and I see no reason to make them wait. Do you, Philip?"

And Philip, aglow with pride in the work of his former pupil, answered, like his namesake in the Bible:

"If they believe with all their hearts, surely they may be baptized!"

The happy little band that went homeward from the mission chapel that day was a troubled one a few weeks later. Out in the little village of their abode great trouble

had come. There was famine, but that there had been before; all of them knew what it was to be hungry most of the time. But now cholera had broken out, and many of the few hundred inhabitants of the village were sick.

For the little group of Christians, however, there was a greater trouble than the fear of sickness. Indeed, since their baptism the neighbors remarked often on their quiet, cheerful faces, and the fearlessness with which they went about the infected village. It was not for their bodies that they were anxious.

The people whom Sadhu had taught were of the caste who were the temple servants. So far none of them had been called upon since their baptism for active service in the heathen worship; but now, when the cholera goddess was raging in the village, there would be a great sacrifice to her, to turn away her anger and stay the plague.

"They will want us all," said one anxious Christian to another. "The priest says that many cattle are to be killed; and we must make them ready for the sacrifice, and carry their heads around the village behind the priest as he chants the hymns to the cholera goddess."

"But we cannot do it," said another. "We are Christians now, and the water of baptism is hardly yet dry upon our heads. How can we deny our Jesus?"

"It will be very hard for some of us," said a man with a large family. "We should be well paid for doing the work. I have many children and they are often hungry, since the famine grows worse. Friends, I do not want to deny the Lord Jesus, but it will need much praying to keep from wishing for the rice that the priest's money would buy."

"Let us see what Sadhu says," one and another would suggest.

The boy teacher was in much perplexity. All night he had prayed earnestly, knowing that his people were in

great temptation. When they came to him his face was bright with decision.

"This will we do, my brothers," he told them. "We will tell the priest when he calls for us that we will make a sacrifice, and pray that the cholera will be taken away; but we will take our offering to the Jesus temple, where we were baptized, and make our prayer to Him for our village. To the cholera goddess we will make no prayer, for there is no such goddess. There is one God, and He only can save."

The priest tried all his persuasions. He told the Christians that they need make no offering themselves and utter no word of prayer, if they would only do the work. But Sadhu kept them firm. Daily they prayed to the Lord Jesus, and each day they brought a small offering, out of their poverty, to the place of prayer.

Some weeks later, when the cholera had passed like a dark cloud from the little village, those who were strong enough to walk so far made another pilgrimage to the mission station. Wasted with hunger as they were, it was a joyous band that stood salaaming when the doctor came out.

"We have brought our offering to the Lord Jesus," said Sadhu, "who kept us true to Him, and turned away the cholera. Not one of the Christian homes has been visited by the sickness, and all have kept their faith. We have come to thank Him for bringing us safely through."

It was a wonderful thanksgiving service that they held in the mission chapel that day; and you may be sure that the Doctor Sahib, and Phili the deacon, did not let them go home without some rice in their wallets for the hungry children, and great joy in their simple, faithful hearts.

DOGS' BOOKS

A little crowd of Burmese village folk might have been seen one day collected about a man with a large pack on his back. A crowd in Burma is always a sight worth looking at. No matter how poor the village, its people always go about clad in rainbow colors; whatever else they save on, it is not on the dyes that color their clothing. A Burmese village on a festal day has all the changing glory of a kaleidoscope, as the many colors move and mingle against the green of the beautiful landscape.

The man who stood in the midst of the crowd was rather a contrast to his listeners. He had evidently traveled many miles along dusty roads. His homespun garment was of undyed cotton, and just now it was travel-stained and gray with dust. On his feet were the home-made wooden slippers worn by the poorer classes in Burma. But his eyes were bright and his face was pleasant; and his speech must have been attractive, for the little knot of villagers kept edging nearer and nearer as he went on talking.

"Who is it?" asked a woman of her neighbor, on the outskirts of the crowd.

"His name is Thwai," replied the other, "and he comes from Rangoon."

"From Rangoon—and dressed like that?" asked the first scornfully. "He looks like some old farmer just in from the field!"

"Oh, he is a Christian, and you know they dress very plainly," said her friend. "They pay all their money for their church and for books. That is what he wants us to do—buy his books and read them."

"I wouldn't buy any of the Christian books!" said the first with a shudder. "I have heard that all who buy them become Christians, and all Christians have to go to the Great War."

"But the Great War is over," put in a bystander.

"That one is," said the woman, "but who knows when there will be another? Did not all the Christians leave their schools and churches and go to the war a few years ago? My cousin from Moulmein told me so."

"At any rate," spoke up another woman, "great troubles will follow all who buy these books. Our priest told me so. If you so much as touch them, the gods will send sickness into your family. If you read them there will be great disasters—earthquakes, floods and fires; maybe another war, indeed!"

By this time the more timid of the on-lookers, hearing such dire predictions about the innocent-looking books he carried, were beginning to draw away from the colporteur. The edges of the crowd began to waver and scatter like flower petals before a gust of wind.

Colporteur Thwai kept on telling about his books. Those who were near enough to hear him plainly were not going away. They stood rooted to their places, held by the charm of the story he was telling. It was the story of another village, its griefs and its Comforter—the little town of Nain.

Just then a rich young Burman came strolling along the street. His dress was a curious mixture, such as one can often see today in Oriental countries where Western customs and ideas are spreading, but not yet reigning.

He wore the bright-hued coat of a Burmese gentleman; but on his feet, instead of the native shoes, were boots of English make, on his head an English straw hat, and in his hand—strangest of all—a short English swagger stick.

To the gentleman's own taste, he was attired in the height of elegance; his manner showed it, and the crowd probably agreed with him, to judge by the admiring glances that were cast as he approached.

The crowd opened to let him through, and so it happened that he passed very near to the dusty, plainly clad colporteur. He paused for an instant, and looked the shabby figure over from head to foot. His glance at length rested on the little book the other held.

"Dogs' books!" said he scornfully, snapping his fingers in contempt.

A flush came to the young colporteur's face, but he was not defeated or silenced. In a moment his voice rang out clearly to the very edge of the crowd.

"Yes, dogs' books, if you call them so!" he cried. "Yet even a dog has sense enough to know where food is buried," and he pointed to the little dog that followed the young dandy, which had begun to sniff and paw at the ground near by. A great wave of laughter ran over the crowd.

"It is only men," went on Thwai, "who are so stupid as not to know where to find the food their souls need. That is why I am trying to show you how to find it.

"Besides——" here it was Thwai's turn to survey the Burman dandy from head to foot; his eyes twinkled merrily as he went on—"besides, young men who adopt English fashions in dress should not jeer at English books."

The shot went home. The scornful young man tried to retreat with as much dignity as possible, but roars of laughter kept following him all the way down the street.

"And now," said Thwai, when the shouts of mirth had subsided, "let me read you another story." And while the crowd hung hushed upon his words, there was a sound that had not been there before. It was a subdued jingling; for in many a knotted fold of a robe or inner pocket, or

on a string of bangles, there were hands exploring secretly for the coin that was presently to buy a book. And the young agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society sold many Testaments that day.

CHANG LI'S LITTLE ROOM

Chang Li was singing again. His employer, the wealthy Hung Su, frowned as he listened. It was not because Chang Li's singing was bad, for the young man had a really pleasant voice; Hung Su had to admit that.

"It is those miserable Christian songs he sings!" muttered his employer. "Everywhere he is, he keeps humming them, even at his desk; and at the noon hour he sings them out loud, and all my people come to listen. And he reads to them out of the little book he carries, and even prays to his God before them. I cannot have it! A Christian church right here in my warehouse, that is what I shall be having soon! It will make me endless trouble with my friends and customers; besides, it will take the minds of my employees off their work. It must stop!"

Chang Li was a bright-faced young man, fresh from the mission college. Even when he was summoned to the office of the great man, he had no thought of being reproved, but walked briskly to the door, humming one of the objectionable Christian hymns along the way. Hung Su caught the sound before the knocking, and it made him crosser than ever.

"Young man," he said abruptly, when Chang Li stood before him, "this place is not a church, nor a mission school. You can't hold your services here, and I'm tired of hearing those silly hymns of yours. You will cause great offense to some of my customers. It must stop, do you hear?"

"Does my honorable employer wish me to leave?" inquired Chang Li politely.

"No," said Hung Su, who had not failed to note the

young clerk's neat and careful work; "not if you can stop disturbing me and my employees with your religion."

"But I cannot stay where I am not allowed to worship my God," said Chang Li firmly.

"Well, worship Him, then," said Hung Su testily, "but do it in your own room. It's rather a nuisance that you room in my establishment, but if you will sing and pray softly up there where it will bother nobody, you may stay."

Chang Li bowed silently and went out. It was a great disappointment to him. He had come from the mission school with rosy dreams of winning many souls for his Master among the men in Hung Su's employ—perhaps even the great man himself. Now he had only succeeded in annoying him, and had made him less favorable to the new religion than ever.

Some of his fellow workers missed Chang Li's singing, and came by one and two to his little room, away off in one corner of the big warehouse. It was a very small room indeed, and would hold only three or four at a time, but very earnest were the songs and prayers that arose there, and Chang was gradually cheered by seeing that his friends were being won more and more as time went on.

One person who came often to the warehouse was outspoken in his laments for the silenced singing. This was Chun, the little nephew of Hung Su—his brother's only son. He loved dearly to visit the rambling old warehouse, and had liked it more than ever since Chang Li had been there.

"Sing me a pretty song, Chang Li," he commanded, coming in some days after Chang had been warned to keep quiet.

"Not today, Chun," said the young man rather sadly.

The boy was quick to catch the tone, and looked up inquiringly into his friend's face.

"Is there a pain in your throat, Chang Li?" he asked.

"No, but I am not permitted to sing any more," said Chang.

"Who said so?" was Chun's next question.

"Your honorable uncle, Hung Su," replied the clerk.

"I will go and see him about it," said Chun, starting determinedly for the door.

"No, no, Chun!" said Chang Li, hastily slipping from his stool and pursuing the child to the door. "He would be very angry and perhaps discharge me. He does not want singing in the warehouse, but he lets me sing in my own room. Some day I will take you there and sing for you."

"And pray to your Jesus-God, and read out of your little book?" asked Chun. "I want to hear again the story about the thousands of people that were fed with a few loaves of bread and fishes."

"Yes, yes," said Chang Li, "some day. Now I must finish making out these bills, or your uncle will say I am a lazy fellow. Come again, little friend!"

And Chun departed, meditating an early visit to Chang's little room.

But before these plans could be carried out a sorry thing happened. Chun, the joy of his father's household, as well as the pet of his uncle, Hung Su, was taken very ill.

"He has convulsions," the report went around the warehouse, "and all the doctors and charm-makers have been called in, but the evil spirits will not come out of him."

Day by day the sad news came. Chang Li was very sad, and many prayers went up from the little room

to the merciful Jesus, the Healer of men. One evening, when Chang was on his knees alone in his room, there came a knocking at the door. He opened it to admit one of Hung Su's servants.

"My master is in great trouble about his brother's son," explained the man. "All has been done for him that the doctors, witches and makers of magic can do; and he lies day and night in a stupor, only when the convulsions seize him. My master sends to ask you, 'What do Christians do in such a case?' "

"We pray to God," came the young man's ready answer. The servant seemed to be expecting it, for he replied:

"Then come and pray for little Master Chun."

"Go to Hung Su," said the clerk, "and remind him that he has forbidden me to read, sing or pray except in this little room. I am praying here all the time for Chun; I love him dearly, and will plead earnestly all night for his recovery."

The servant disappeared; but not more than fifteen minutes had passed when he came back again.

"My master says, come quickly and pray by the child's bedside," he insisted. "Your God might make a mistake, and cure the wrong child."

"My God makes no mistakes," said Chang Li proudly. "But if it is permitted I will come and pray for the little Chun willingly." And he followed the servant to the house of Hung Su's brother.

Hung Su himself was waiting anxiously there with the others, and it was with great difficulty that Chang kept them all from crowding into the room where the child lay.

"You will pray aloud so that we may hear?" inquired the child's father.

"Yes, I will pray aloud," said Chang; and they all

gathered about the door to hear their first Christian prayer.

Only a few sentences had Chang uttered, when the eyes of the sick boy unclosed and a misty smile stole across his face.

"Chang! dear Chang Li!" he whispered. "Sing me a song; my uncle will let you now!"

Hymn after hymn the young man sang, with words of prayer between. As the boy listened, smiling, a soft dew began to gather on his forehead. Chang put his hand there, and knew that the fever was breaking. On and on he sang, with that hushed family waiting breathless around the door. At last the child fell into a sweet, natural sleep, still smiling, and holding fast to the young man's hand.

* * *

A few months ago the wealthy Hung Su, now a regular attendant at Christian services in the village, called his young clerk again to his office.

"Chang Li," he said, "what do you know about this meeting of Christians they are going to have at Chao-cheng?"

"It is going to be a great Conference," said Chang Li readily. He had just come from conducting the noonday service now held regularly in the warehouse. "Our church wanted to send a delegate, but it is a long way, and we had not money enough."

"Here," said his employer, handing him a bag, "is the money for your expenses to go to Chao-cheng. I want you to go and tell all who are there how the Christians' God answers prayer and honors his faithful servants. Go, and God be with you! But return soon, or Chun will grieve his heart away for you!"

And he waved the delighted young man out of his office with a smile that left no doubt as to what Hung Su thought about Christians now.

WHEN DASTUR ATE SAGO

"Truly," said Dastur to himself, pausing to count the small coins in his hand, "truly, I am very tired of rice. Also, the tourist sahib threw me a half anna for telling him the road that would take him the quickest to Chirala. What strange people the sahibs from America are! All they think of is to get somewhere quick—quick. One would think he feared Chirala would run away while he was going to it. So he makes his car run faster, faster, and stirs up all the road into a great dust, very bad for poor people who have to walk.

"Well, he is gone, but his half anna is here. They must be princes, these American sahibs, to pay so large a price for a few words that take but a moment to say. So I am richer than I thought to be this day, and I remember that for a long time I have been very tired of rice and wished for a change of fare. What shall it be?"

By this time, strolling along as he talked to himself, Dastur had reached the main street of the village and the stalls of its tiny bazaar. Before he went to his work he must buy the small portion of food that would furnish his chief meal of the day. Usually it was a small handful of rice, which he boiled and ate without thinking much about it. On holidays a little portion of fish or a handful of fruit added to the rice made a banquet.

Today he was not quite extravagant enough for such indulgence, but he was determined on a change—something, at least, that would be different from the daily meal of rice. Even a Hindu brought up on that nourishing grain grows weary of it at times.

In the bazaar he stood irresolute, glancing from side to side. How beautiful were the plums and apricots! But one could not make a meal of them alone when a hard day's work was to be done. And it was not a holiday, that he should have two kinds of food at one meal.

Presently his face brightened. Sago was almost as cheap as rice and it had quite a different taste. He would have some for his dinner that day.

The dealer carefully weighed the small portion of sago and dumped it into an improvised sack made of a sheet of printed paper. Dastur took it, paid the man and went away to his work.

When the meal hour came Dastur slung his little cooking pot over the fire and prepared to boil his sago. As he smoothed out the printed page in which the food was wrapped, he noticed that it was not merely a bit torn from a newspaper. Evidently it was a page out of a book. Also, it was in his own language. Dastur was rather proud of being able to read. He smoothed the page still more carefully and began to puzzle out the words which sounded rather strange to him.

"Peace," he read, "peace—I—leave—with—you."

It was a pleasant saying. As he read on he decided that the speaker must be some great "guru," or teacher, who was going away on a journey. Perhaps he was a prince, for he spoke about his Father's House and said there were many mansions in it, and that the friends he was leaving were to come there some day to live with him.

Dastur turned the sheet. There another pleasant word caught his eye—"joy." "And—that—your—joy—might—be—full." Peace and joy! Surely the man must be a prince who could give such parting gifts as

these! And he had thought the American a prince, with his half anna!

He read every word on both sides of the sheet. He very nearly let his precious sago burn while he devoured the pleasant words, and ate it with very little sense of the difference between it and his customary rice.

There was one thing he could not understand. In spite of the peace and joy there was also a tone of sadness. Something was going to happen to the Prince, the wonderful Teacher. How he wished he might know the whole story!

Several days passed and Dastur could not forget the bit of paper. Indeed, he carried it with him and read it whenever he got a chance, and his desire to know the whole story kept growing and growing.

At last he went to the merchant from whom he had bought the sago.

"Ah, yes!" said the man. "That was a page from a book that a foreign sahib was selling here one day. He came from two-three villages away. I bought the book to see what it was like, but I got tired of reading it, so I used the pages to wrap my sago in when I sold it. They are all gone now."

"But the man—the sahib?" inquired Dastur eagerly. "Where did you say he lived? Is it far from here?"

The man gave him the name of the village and turned to another customer.

Some nights later a missionary was wakened before dawn by a persistent knocking at his door.

"It is I—Dastur, from the village where your books were sold two moons ago," came the call. "I am come for a book that tells of one who said, 'Peace I leave with you' and 'Your joy shall be full.' "

The missionary was very sleepy, but not too drowsy

to recognize those words. Going to his shelves, by the light of a candle he chose a small copy of the Gospel of John.

The man at the door received it with outstretched hands, paid the small price the missionary named and went gliding away into the early morning twilight as noiselessly as a ghost. The missionary rubbed his eyes and would almost have believed he dreamed it all, except for the coin in his hand and the vacancy in the bookshelf.

Later he said to himself: "Why didn't I stop that fellow and ask him some questions? It may be worth while following him up. If he came all that distance for a book, he must be interested. Well, when I go back to his village, I'll look him up."

It was several months before the missionary's tasks took him again in the direction of Dastur's village. It was rather a puzzling task to inquire for a man whose name he did not know, but he came upon his traces in the bazaar at last.

"Oh, yes, sahib," said the sago dealer. "His name is Dastur, and he read a leaf of the book that was wrapped around my sago. He gave me no peace after that till I told him where the sahib lived. He has read his little book and talked about it to everybody in the village, and now he has gone out to all the villages around to tell people about that wonderful Yesu, who gives gifts of peace and joy.

"He told me if the sahib came again to say that many more would be wanting books, and he will leave the money here with me to pay for them. Truly, I think I will buy another for myself, since the sago customers got all the other one. It is not a bad story, and Dastur says he never gets tired of reading it."

And the missionary, following Dastur through the villages, found many waiting to be gathered into the kingdom of the Prince who came to bring peace and joy to all the world.

MISSIONARY MUSTARD

None of the village elders could tell how Chief Senga got his stiff neck. He could not imagine, himself, how it ever happened. One night he lay down to sleep in the grass-roofed mud hut which is all the palace an African chief can boast. The next morning his head was twisted to one side, and he could not straighten it at all. Whenever he tried a terrible pain shot through his neck and shoulder, as if somebody were trying to twist his head off.

He was very much alarmed, for he had never felt anything like it before. The fact that he had been out in the rain the previous night and had lain down to sleep with a wet cloth wrapped about him, and with his head on a bale of new calico two feet high, just purchased with ivory tusks from a trader—that these facts had anything at all to do with the pain in his neck, he never imagined. How was one to keep a bale of new calico from being stolen in the night unless he slept on it? Each of his thirty wives was to have a new dress out of that bale before anybody else in the village got a chance at it. Wives were a great expense, but a chief must have many of them to show his importance, and they must be well dressed, too.

But this terrible stiff neck! Senga tried to lift his head erect, and howled with pain. Something beyond his powers to explain had happened in the night. He was frightened and helpless, with the African's great fear of the unknown.

He summoned all the village elders to his hut; that is, he sent a boy to call them, and after one look

at Senga the boy made haste to spread the news that the chief was sitting outside his hut groaning like a wounded elephant, with his head almost down on his shoulder.

Presently a noisy crowd of Job's comforters surrounded the old man. Surely he had done something to offend the evil spirits. Senga growled at that so fiercely that the man who said it slunk to the rear of the crowd. Then one and another, with much head-shaking, declared that there was no question about it. Nothing but witchcraft could produce such a result over night in a perfectly well man. Somebody had certainly bewitched Chief Senga.

"Very well," growled Senga. "Then find the witch, and take the spell off of me."

"The witch doctor!" someone called. In a few moments an eager messenger had brought the witch doctor with his charms.

It took him a long time to arrange all his belongings, Senga groaning loudly every few minutes and urging him to hurry. He burned things that smelled very bad, flourished a cow's tail in the air, and muttered strange words; drew circles on the ground and sprinkled the broth from a kettle upon them; and finally declared:

"Oh, Senga, the witch is one of thine own household!"

"I thought so," groaned the chief. "Women can never wait! They were all angry because I would not give them their dresses last night."

This did not help matters very much. Thirty wives were angry, but not all of them could have done the deed. Senga was not minded to have all his wives put to death, as must surely be done to the witch.

The witch doctor must use his skill and discover which one of the thirty it was.

By this time the thirty suspects were crowded back of the hut, their black faces ashy gray with fear.

"He will say it is Moa," said one, "Her brother would not pay him a chicken when he found his lost bracelet. He said the witch doctor stole and hid it, and that was why he could find it so easily."

"No, it will be Bobo," said another. "He has never liked her since she made him soup with too many hot peppers in it, and burned his tongue."

The loss of the chicken must have rankled in the witch doctor's memory longer than the pepper soup; for after a great deal more boiling and burning, waving and muttering, he called out the thirty, and as they passed before him he pointed out Moa as the guilty one. At sunset she must die, and the spell would be loosed.

It was a bitter pill for Senga, for he really liked Moa best of all his wives. But as he raised his head to look at her a worse pain than ever shot through it. He roared with rage and commanded, "Let her be put to death at sunset!"

Just then a new sensation attracted the noisy crowd.

"White man! White man!" shouted a boy, racing through the village at top speed. He came from the next town, and had come to spread the alarm that a stranger was at hand.

Now that the matter of Moa was settled, nobody had any more time for the women. Everybody but poor Moa, who was quickly tied inside the hut, and Senga, who still sat groaning, trooped off to see the white man. He would probably have calico to trade, or beads, or possibly even a flask of whiskey.

The greetings exchanged, the crowd soon discovered

that the white man was not a trader. He had come, indeed, on a very foolish errand, they thought. He wanted to take their boys and girls back yonder to a school he was starting, to "learn book." What was the use of all that? they asked each other. Who knew what he would do with them when he got them there? Chief Senga was sensible; he would not let this crazy white person carry off their children.

The missionary asked to see the chief. Looks of awe and shaken heads warned him that it was not a good time to ask a favor of Chief Senga. By this time they had reached the middle of the village, and the chief's groans reached their ears.

"Good morning, chief!" said that reckless white man, striding up to Senga and offering his hand. Senga only groaned the harder.

"What's the trouble here? Stiff neck?" asked the white man. With impressive gestures the elders told him that the chief had been bewitched, and the witch doctor's "medicine" had just discovered the culprit.

"When she be shot, time sun go down," they concluded, "him neck live for get well!"

"H-m!" said the missionary. "Not till sunset? Must poor Senga suffer all that time?"

"That time when she make charm last night," said the witch doctor solemnly.

"Well," said the white man, "I have some medicine of my own about me somewhere that I think would give you relief sooner than that, Chief Senga—and not kill the poor woman," he added in an undertone. Senga heard him in spite of his groans.

"You got strong medicine?" he inquired. The African thinks no medicine of any use unless it is bitter enough or hot enough to bring tears to his eyes.

"Plenty strong," smiled the missionary, fumbling in

the bag a native companion had been carrying on his head. He soon produced from its depths a small box of mustard ointment.

"Here it is, chief," he said. "Will you let me try it on you?"

The witch doctor started forward to protest, but Senga waved him away.

"You had your turn," he said, "and I feel no better. Now let the white man try his medicine."

Some ointment was quickly spread on a cloth and applied to the chief's neck and shoulder. Presently tears began to roll down Senga's black cheeks, but the faster they rolled, the wider did his smile become.

"It is good medicine," he gasped. "It has a strength to kill elephants. Already the spell is being lifted."

"Just you keep that on your neck as long as you can stand it, chief," advised the missionary. "Your neck will be better long before sunset."

Indeed, in less than an hour Senga was able to lift his head from his shoulder, not without some twinges and groans, but with ever-increasing ease. When the third application of mustard ointment had made him well blistered and perfectly happy, he roared of a sudden:

"Set Moa loose and kick the witch doctor out of the village!"

There were plenty of volunteers for both services. The missionary feasted that night with the chief on young pig and sweet potatoes, with the beaming Moa to wait on them; and when the white man left the village next day he took with him Senga's promise of twenty boys and as many girls for the new school, some of them the chief's own children.

"It was worth it," said the missionary, trudging back

through the bush. "But I shall have to send for more mustard ointment. The greedy old fellow has used it, every bit, for the mere pleasure of feeling it burn. Half of it would have cured him!"

YUSUF AND THE APRICOT TREE

"Oh, great and wonderful doctor!" cried Mirza, bowing low before the missionary. "Thou hast given me back the life of my child, my only son! Praises be to Allah—no, to Issa (Jesus)!" he amended, remembering that the doctor was a Christian.

"Yes," said the missionary doctor kindly, "it is the merciful Jesus who has given back your son, just as He healed people when He was on earth."

"What can thy servant do to repay thee?" went on Mirza, in his joy. "I am thy slave forever! I kiss thy feet! I——"

"Never mind, Mirza," interrupted the doctor, who knew how much allowance to make for Oriental exaggeration. "I am sure I don't want any slaves, and my shoes are much too dusty to be kissed. If you want to do anything to show your gratitude, do it for the Mission, not for me."

"Ah!" cried Mirza, who by this time had worked himself up to a high pitch of excitement. "Thou hast said it! To Issa will I make my vow, and thou art witness thereof. Behold!"

He clutched the missionary by the arm and pulled him out into the courtyard.

"See, exalted one!" he exclaimed. "Here stands the tree that was planted when my boy was born. As old as my Yusuf, even so old is his birthday tree. Now hear my vow. Never shall an apricot from this tree be tasted, except by Christians, or those to whom they minister! Every year, when the fruit is ripe, it shall be gathered with care and taken to thy hospital, most gracious one. There shall thy patients eat the fruit,

and thou also; or, if thou prefer, sell it and use the profit thereof for thy sick. I have said it!"

"Why, Mirza," said the doctor, touched by the little man's earnestness, "that is really a fine gift. It is a beautiful, healthy tree, and I have no doubt its fruit will bring much refreshment to my sick people. In their name, and that of my Master, I gladly accept the gift."

But Mirza was not through. The doctor's appreciation had fired him with ambition to win still greater praise.

"And behold, O healer of the sick," he went on, swelling his small form with vast importance, "that is but the lesser part of my vow! When my son, my Yusuf, whose life thou hast restored, is come to the age of seven years, then shall he go, even my son, to thy Mission, to be trained as a teacher of the Gospel of Issa. This I swear——"

"Hold on there, Mirza!" exclaimed the doctor in alarm. "The apricots were all very well, but don't promise more than you will be willing to pay. Yusuf is your only child, and when you have lived past your present excitement you may regret——"

"No, no!" shouted Mirza, fairly dancing in his eagerness. "I swear it by the beard of the Prophet—no, by the splendor of Solomon—I will give you my son to be a Christian teacher! I vow it, by all that is sacred. I will not regret it! From the day he is seven, which is now but two years away, he is thine, to train for the work. All good angels, witness my vow!"

The whole household, except the sick boy, had by this time crowded into the courtyard to hear what was going on. Mirza took them all to be witnesses of his fixed intention concerning the boy. The mother of Yusuf wept and wailed, but he bade her be silent. As

soon as possible the doctor escaped, leaving Mirza embracing the apricot tree and shouting his vow to the planets, the sun, the moon, and all the heavenly bodies.

Yusuf quickly grew strong, and was playing once more about the courtyard.

"What a boy he is!" said Mirza as he watched him at his play. "How fine in body, how bright in mind! Surely, no other boy of five was ever so manly, so brilliant, so handsome. Truly, it is a great gift I have vowed to the Christians' God! Ah, well, two years are a long time!"

But the two years passed more quickly than Mirza had thought. Once, twice, he had harvested the apricots and sent them to the hospital. Both times it had been a comparatively small crop, for the tree was still young, and its earliest blossoms had all been pinched off to make the fruit grow larger and more perfect.

The third year, just before the birthday of Yusuf, was a marvelous time for the apricot tree. It hung loaded with golden fruit, as large as a peach, and so fragrant that Mirza's mouth watered at the odor.

"Allah has rewarded my generosity," he said. "There is far more fruit here than the people at the hospital can possibly use. The sign is a good one; it means that I am to keep part for myself, and not be a loser because of my gratitude."

So he ordered a basket of the fruit picked and taken to the hospital, as usual. It was twice as large a basket as either time before, and yet the tree looked hardly less full when it had been taken away. All the rest did the prudent Mirza sell to a dealer, who paid him a price that made his greedy old eyes glisten.

"So Allah rewards his servants," he said piously, fingering the money with great enjoyment.

Somehow Mirza did not make much of an observance of Yusuf's birthday that year. "He is still so young," he mused. "I should have said ten years, instead of seven. How will he do without his mother's care? And how will I do without him?" he groaned, watching the boy tossing and catching a ball in the sunlight. The missionary's parting words, after he had made his vow, came back to him again.

"Now remember, Mirza," he had said, "nobody asked you to make this vow, or would even have dreamed of doing so. But, without being asked, you have made it of your own accord, before God and all these witnesses, and you will keep that vow, or God will cause you to remember it. 'It is better that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay,' He says, and He keeps His word."

Mirza trembled, but still he said nothing about sending Yusuf to the Mission. All the household loved the boy and hoped his father would forget to send him away; so nobody spoke to him about it. Things went on just as usual, except that Mirza, when he walked abroad, always took another turn when he saw the doctor coming.

So the season of harvest passed, and another spring was beginning to whiten the fruit trees with blossoms, when one morning Mirza heard loud lamentations in the courtyard. Running out in fear that something had happened to Yusuf, he found that young man weeping under the apricot tree.

"My tree, father! Look at my tree! All the other trees are in blossom, and mine is dead!"

Mirza looked at the tree. Truly, there was no sign of bud or leaf about it. He broke a twig—no token of life! It was brown and brittle, with no sign of rising

sap. In alarm, he broke a larger branch. A dry, powdery dust arose from it. Hoarsely he called for an axe and chopped off one of the main boughs. There was no doubt about it—the tree was dead.

Mirza left Yusuf soothing his grief by chopping at the lifeless trunk. He went into his own apartments and shut the door. There he sat down and thought a long time; and his thoughts were not pleasant ones.

That evening as the sun was near its setting a little procession climbed the hill to the Mission house. It consisted of an elderly man, somewhat red about the eyes, holding by the hand an awed and silent small boy; and after them a servant bore a little trunk.

"I have brought thee my son, most honorable one," said Mirza, standing very humbly and swallowing hard between words. "He is now past the age of seven years, and he is thine, even as I said. The apricots will come to thee no more; for I cheated thy God, who is mine also from this day, and He took away the tree in its prime. Oh," with a break in his voice that set Yusuf to sobbing quietly, "take him, in Issa's name, that he be not also taken away from me! Let him not die, like the tree, but live many years and serve well the Christ, who is my Lord and thine."

So that is how the young teacher, Yusuf ben Mirza, came, like Samuel, in his boyhood, to the house of the Lord; and there he now teaches many to know the loving Christ, who may blight a tree, as once He did on earth, for a message to the soul of a man, but never casts out any who come to Him to be forgiven.

BROKEN BOWLS

The hour of the mid-day meal had brought a brief space of rest to the weary women and girls who worked in one of the rice-bowl factories of Osaka, Japan. Aching feet and backs enjoyed a change of position, and busy tongues clacked faster than busy hands had worked a few moments before, while the simple meal was eaten.

"Noshi has had one of her tantrums again, has she not?" inquired a girl, coming from one group to another, and sitting down beside a friend.

"She broke four bowls this morning," said the other, with a shrug of her thin shoulders. "Of course, she said it was an accident, and we know she will not be punished because the forewoman is her mother's cousin. But everybody knows it was just her temper that made her do it. She was angry at us because we teased her. She hates to be teased about her lame foot; and it is mean of us to do it, but it is fun to see her smash the bowls. When you stand all day with nothing to think about but the packing of rice bowls, and the dust from the straw packing gets into your throat and makes you cough, you must do something for a change."

"I broke one myself this morning because I was angry," confessed the first speaker. "Suzuki told the others that I slept on the floor, because we were too poor to buy beds. The imp of evil,—when she knows my mother has three beautiful beds! She was at our house one night when it rained too hard for her to go home, and she knows very well what we have."

"Well, it's just as I said," replied the other girl. "We get so tired and stupid that if we have nothing

else to say we make up lies. I think all the evil spirits must live in factories, and get into us when we are not watching."

"If it were not for my little sister," said her friend, "I often think I would go and jump down a well somewhere. She is so bright, and wants so badly to go to school, that I am working as hard as I can to get a little money so that she can go. I wish I could have gone, but it is too late for that now," she ended, with a sigh.

"Look!" said the other, noticing a stir at the other end of the room. "Who are the strangers that are coming in?"

"They look like foreigners," said the first, raising herself on her knees to look. "Yes, that is the American lady who teaches the Sunday school my sister goes to. She is very kind and good, the children say. The other one must be the new teacher who came last week; I never saw her before. I wonder what they are going to do!"

They had not long to wait. Presently the sound of a hymn floated out over the hushed crowd of girls. It was about somebody named Jesus—only "Yesu" is more like the sound of it in Japanese—who loved people and told tired folks to come to Him and rest. Many a weary young face softened as they listened to the gentle words.

Then the lady who taught the Sunday school told a beautiful story about that same Jesus—how He went about healing sick and blind and lame people, and teaching everybody to be kind to others. Noshi glanced down at her crippled foot with longing in her eyes, and the girls who had teased her looked uncomfortable.

After the little talk was over and the strangers had

gone, more than one girl was quiet and thoughtful. Mischievous Suzuki slipped over to the girl she had teased and whispered quickly, "I'm sorry, Oyuki!" just before the signal for work was given and she had to go back to her task.

"I wonder if they will come again," said many a girl to another. The rest of that day they had something new to think about, and work went faster, somehow, than it had before.

They did come again, and again, and again. Not every day, but once or twice a week the mission school teachers held their little service, sometimes assisted by one or two of the larger girls from the school. After a little even the days on which they did not come were not without a bit of song; for the girls had quickly learned the hymns they heard and would sing them in a chorus that had new voices added to it every day. And soon the Mission people found out who could read and gave them copies of a little book that told the Jesus-story from beginning to end. Then the lunch hour would see little groups of girls seated around a reader here and there, listening to the story of which they never grew tired.

Nobody knew just when Noshi stopped having tantrums, but more than once she said, "Everybody is so kind to me now that I could not get angry if I wanted to." Oyuki never thought about the well any more, because she had learned about a beautiful place where she would live with Jesus some day, if she were patient till He asked her to come. Fun-loving Suzuki had learned to read and tell the Jesus-story so well that the Mission teachers asked her to come and help in the Sunday school, where nobody could hold the attention of the beginners as well as she.

The owner of the factory was not a Christian, and

when first he let the Mission people come in to tell their story he did it only to please a friend who was interested in the Mission school. But after a year had passed and the fruits of those little noon-day talks began to appear, he did a very remarkable thing. He wrote a letter to a Japanese magazine, advising other factory owners to let their workers be taught the Jesus-story.

"During the twelve months since the missionaries began coming to the factory," he wrote, "a thousand less rice bowls were broken than the year before, because there is less bad temper among the girls who hear the Christian teaching."

"Indeed," says Noshi—and many others say it with her—"I hardly know how it sounds to break a bowl any more. I think the hymns we sing sound much better!"

THE WAY OF THE SHINING FACE

"Oto," said the white man sternly, "where in the world are you and Mapuhi going?"

It was many years since the missionary had first come to the Solomon Islands—the "terrible Solomons," where the headhunters and cannibals had things all their own way before the gospel came among them. He had lived to see great changes there. Even the heathen islanders no longer celebrated their human feasts on the open beach; evil had slunk farther and farther away from the light, as it always does when good comes in. Yet there were many heathen practices still remaining; and the faithful white teacher could never hear the native drum calling the people to a dance without fear for his Christian converts. Would they be drawn back into the darkness again?

Now the summons had gone out for a great heathen festival. From the mission veranda he could see group after group of savages, decked with anklets, armlets, and head dresses of nodding, many-colored plumes, gathering down on the beach. It was a beautiful picture, with the gayly dressed natives moving about on the curving beach, its coral sands showing white as snow against the deep blue background of a tropical sea, and the green palms waving against a bluer sky.

But it did not look fair to the troubled eyes of the missionary. Perhaps some of his latest converts were there—too newly won to be strong, as yet, in their faith, too easily persuaded by friends and relatives to join them once more in what they would claim was

a farewell celebration. It would not be the old-time cannibal feast, indeed; but there would be evil enough in it, and every kind of base superstition, to draw the new Christians away from their faith and make them worship the old gods again.

Now, as he watched the groups, there came two men among them who did not look like the rest. No plumes of gaudy feathers tossed above their heads; no anklets jingled as they walked. Plainly dressed in white, they walked quietly side by side to the beach. They were two of the native Christians—deacons in the little mission church. Why were they going to the dance?

They stopped quickly as the missionary hailed them. There was no shame on their faces, no confusion upon their tongues as they replied:

"We go down to the dance on the beach."

"But why——?" The missionary's words failed him. Was he going to lose the first and finest of all his converts, the men he had trusted as his own right hand?

"Sir," said Oto, seeing the white man's distress, "I will tell you about it. Today the dance is a great one; there has been none like it for many years. All the tribes of many islands will be there; and the great chief, Tanoa, will sit at the head. You know, we have been praying a long time that Tanoa would see the light and come to believe with us. So we go to the dance; and if the Lord gives us speech we will ask Tanoa to hear us in His Name!"

The dark face of Oto was bright with hope as he finished, and his look was reflected on that of Mapuhi. But the missionary shook his head.

"Is there no other way, my brothers?" he asked. "Can I not go instead? Surely it is my place to speak to Tanoa, if speaking must be done."

"You do not trust us!" said Mapuhi quickly. He was of a hastier temper than Oto, and he felt suspicion in the missionary's words. "You fear we will go back to the old gods. You teach us that Christ will keep us safe anywhere, and then you fear to have us even see the dancing!"

Oto interrupted him, with a softer tone.

"It is ours to go," he said. "Tanoa will hear his own people rather than a stranger. Once a white man did him great wrong, and he fears and hates a white face now. We will not forget the God you have taught us to know, dear sir."

The missionary's hands went out to both of them.

"Forgive me!" he said. "Your hearts are right, and I was wrong to fear for you. May He go with you and teach you what to say!"

Many heads were turned to look as the two Christians entered the circle already beginning to sit down on the beach about the carved wooden bowls, filled with pounded cocoanuts and yams for the feast. No men of the islands were more honored than Oto and Mapuhi; for they had built themselves what the natives regarded as very fine houses, since the white man had come and taught them his ways. Besides, they were known as men of strict honor and as neighbors who were always ready to help when any one was in trouble. Their presence at the dance made quite a sensation; but no one was bold enough to ask what brought them there.

Tanoa himself cast many curious glances at them as they sat among the gayly adorned savages, eating moderately of the food that was handed to them. He had never been able to understand what such men could see in the new religion—one that had neither feasts nor dances, that taught people to be quiet and

peaceable, and to forgive their enemies instead of taking their heads off. Again and again he looked at them, and it seemed as though a new light began to dawn in his eyes.

Greatly to the surprise of his people, when the meal was ending and the drums began to sound for the dance, Tanoa held up a hand glistening with ornaments, and stopped the musicians. A moment he sat undecided; then, with a sudden movement, he rose and stepped into the circle.

Straight over to Oto and Mapuhi he walked. All the people held their breath. Was he going to punish the Christians for having forsaken their gods, or welcome them back again? Oto and Mapuhi rose as he approached, and stood respectfully waiting.

Then the old chief spoke out clearly, so that everybody heard in all the listening crowd.

"Oto and Mapuhi," he said, "followers of the new God, I want you to pray for me. Pray strong for me, my friends! I want you to pray for my people, too, and bring them to your church to learn about your God."

A murmur rose from the crowd, but another wave of the jeweled hand quieted it.

"I look at the people like you, who call themselves Christians," he went on, "and I see the faces of all of you shining as if your hearts were happy. My people are not like that." He swung around and viewed the gaudily dressed circle with disapproval. "They look heavy, and their eyes are dull. Their faces do not shine. Once you were like that, too; you lived like us and prayed to the evil spirits. But I see you have found a better way.

"Your way is the Way of the Shining Face! I want to come and learn about that God you pray to, that

makes your faces shine; and my people shall learn, too, so that all of us may know that God. You all pray strong for me!"

The missionary on his veranda leaped up, a few minutes later, and ran down the steps. Up from the beach the many-colored crowd was streaming toward the Mission. In the midst were two white-clad figures. His first thought was that they were bringing the Christians to torture and kill them before his eyes.

Then he saw that a tall, jewel-decked figure walked between Oto and Mapuhi, holding a hand of each. He walked quickly to meet them; and as he drew near, Tanoa stepped forward and greeted him with the salutation used only by one chief to another.

"White brother," he said, "we have come, I and my people, to learn of you the Way of the Shining Face."

THE BREAKING OF THE STONE-GOD

Along the road that led to a little village in Central Japan, a man was steadily trudging. On his back was a large pack of something that appeared to be heavy.

"Only a little farther," he said to himself, shifting the pack on his shoulders. "This is a good time to reach the village, for it is almost sunset, and the farmers are all coming in from their patches. I shall meet them at some place where they can stop to chat."

Sure enough, as he entered the village a little group of men stood around a well near the center of the little hamlet, exchanging the day's gossip about crops and weather. Dark-eyed children, who had run to meet them, gathered the hoes and rakes the tired farmers had dropped, and rode "horseback" gayly on their handles. Women peeped out of their doors to see how soon the master of the house would be ready for his supper. The newcomer had his audience for what he wanted to say.

It was not long before they spied him coming along the street.

"Ho, friend, your burden is heavy," cried good-natured farmer Matsu. "You should rest and have a cool drink before you go on."

The man with the pack unbuckled a strap that held it, and eased it willingly from his tired shoulders to the ground.

"I am Kiyoshi Tanaka, from Kobe," he said. "I am traveling with this pack to visit many villages and to give the people a chance to buy for themselves the greatest treasure in the world."

Some of the women from the adjoining houses began to edge nearer to see what treasure this peddler had

to dispose of. The children were already fingering the buckles of the pack.

Tanaka opened it in the presence of a curious circle of onlookers. A sigh of disappointment went up from some of the women, and the children went back to their play, when they saw that it contained nothing but books.

"A strange treasure, indeed," said Matsu, laughing. "What makes the little books so precious, friend?"

"This is a message," said Tanaka, "from the great God who lives in heaven. It is written to tell us that we are all His children, and to teach us how to live as the children of God ought to. Everything we need to know is written in this book."

A stir among the listeners began to agitate the circle, and a sharp-faced little man pushed to the front.

"You say this book tells everything we need to know about the God of heaven, and all things that are good?" he inquired, thrusting his ferret face close to Tanaka.

"Yes," replied the stranger.

"Then, no doubt," said the little man, "it will explain to us about the stone-god who lives in our village."

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed the crowd. "Show him the stone-god, Nichi, and see if his book can tell us where it came from, and why it is angry with us?"

The whole crowd joined in escorting Tanaka to see the stone-god. Some of the mothers called their children to come back, fearing the stone-god would hurt them; but very little attention was paid to these warnings. The procession soon reached the outskirts of the village; and Tanaka saw a large oddly shaped stone lying on the ground. A fence had been built around it, and he noticed that even the little boys kept at a safe distance from it.

"Some years ago," explained Nichi, "there was a great noise one night, as of many thousand fire-crackers going off at once. Some people, who were not afraid to look out, said they saw a fiery path in the heavens that faded out as they looked. Next day this stone lay where you see it.

"Of course nobody wanted to meddle with it because it looked as if some god were very angry, to send it in such a way. Those who did touch it always had some illness or very bad fortune soon afterward.

"There was one young man in the village who would never believe in the power of the stone-god. It is not long since he came out here to show us that he was not afraid of it. He even put his foot on it!" A shudder of fear ran over the crowd. "Soon after, he became sick in his feet; and now he sits in his father's house and cannot walk one step! You may see him back here in the village." More shivers and groans of sympathy from the crowd.

"So after that," concluded Nichi, "we put this fence around the stone so that no one might touch it and be harmed. Now, stranger, can your wonderful book tell us about the stone, and why the god who dwells in it is so angry and wants to do us harm?"

Tanaka was leafing rapidly over one of the little Bibles.

"No," he said, "there is nothing in here about gods who live in stones, because there is but one true God, and He lives in the heavens. And if men live as He commands, and trust Him as dear children, no stone or anything else will hurt them. Listen!" and he read aloud from the fifth chapter of Job:

" 'For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.' "

"And do you believe in that God?" asked Nichi craftily.

"Certainly I do," replied Tanaka.

"Then the stone will not hurt you; and if you truly believe in your God, you will touch it and not be harmed," said Nichi, with an evil gleam in his small eyes.

"No, no!" broke in good old Matsu, who had been listening with a troubled look on his broad face. "Send not the young man to his hurt, Nichi! He has done us no harm, and he is a well-spoken youth."

But Tanaka was already laying off his coat and preparing to swing himself over the fence.

"Stop, friend!" cried Matsu, laying hold of him. But Tanaka drew his arm gently away.

"He has challenged my God," he answered, "and I must show him that I mean what I have said."

There was breathless silence as Tanaka vaulted the fence and stood beside the stone. A scientist would have guessed at once, both from its history and from its porous appearance, that it was but a piece of slag dropped by an exploding meteor; the harm it had done had been wrought by the nervous fears of the superstitious villagers.

Tanaka laid his hands on the stone. "It is cracked already," he said. Picking up another stone from the ground, he hammered the meteorite, breaking off a large piece. After examining it coolly he threw it over the fence into the stream that ran on the other side. Another piece followed, and another.

"Doesn't it hurt you?" asked Matsu anxiously.

"Nobody but the stone is getting hurt," Tanaka assured him.

"But wait!" cried Nichi. "In a few days you will have great pain in your hands, and maybe you can never use them any more."

"I'll be back this way in a few weeks," laughed Tanaka. "If there is anything wrong with my hands by that time you may believe in your stone-god!"

And he did come back, safe and sound, and sold many Bibles in that village.

"You did a fine thing," said Matsu, buying books for all his sons and their children. "The fence is gone, and we have thrown the old stone into the river. Now we want to hear no more about the stone-god, but about the Heaven-God who takes care of us all and makes us fear nothing. That is the God for me!"

"But there is one thing yet we need, Radama!"

The new hut was finished. Radama had worked very hard to get it ready for his little bride. He stood surveying it now with great satisfaction, until her words brought a shadow of surprise across his beaming face.

"What is that, Fantaka?" he asked quickly. "I thought I had all that you could need. Do you wish another mat, or a larger cooking pot?"

"No, Radama," said the bride, touching his arm timidly and pointing to an empty corner of the little hut. "It is that we have yet no god for our home; and see, what a fine place to put one!"

Radama's face brightened again. "I did not forget the god, little wife," he said. "I thought I would wait till we might go together and order one from the idol-maker, such as would suit you best. Well I know, as you do also, that no home can be complete without its household god, and prayers offered daily, with food and drink set before him, so that all we do may be prospered. Tomorrow we will go and get Bezano to make us a fine large god to put there in the corner."

"That will be good," said Fantaka, her little brown face glowing with pleasure. Then, with all the pride of a young housekeeper, she set about preparing their first supper; and Radama followed her about, helping a little and hindering a great deal; for newly-married couples are much the same in Madagascar as in America, after all.

Next evening the young husband and wife set out gayly to the house of Bezano, the idol maker.

"We want a large one," said Radama.

"And a god with a kind face," said Fantaka. "These

are ugly!" she whispered aside to Radama, pointing to the idols that stood or lay around the room.

"I have no block large enough for such a god as you want," said Bezano as Radama indicated the height with his hand. "Come again in a week, and I will have one ready and make the god just as you want him."

Bezano really meant to keep his word to Radama, who was known as an industrious young man and would probably be able to pay well for his idol. Besides, the eager face of little Fantaka had touched his old heart, and he had already determined to make her a smiling god instead of a frowning one. But he was a busy man, and in filling other orders forgot his promise.

So when the week had passed and Radama came home from his work in the evening, he found Fantaka shedding a few tears.

"I passed the shop of Bezano today," she said, "and asked him if our god was ready, and he had not even got the block for it yet."

"Never mind," said Radama. "Tomorrow I have a holiday, and we will go and tell Bezano that we want our god at once; and we will just stay and watch him make it."

Bezano was very apologetic when the young couple came the next morning. "See," he said, "I will go out at once to the forest and cut the log; you may go with me, if you will, and choose a proper tree. Then I will make the god for you at once."

It was like a little picnic, going out to the forest with the old man and helping him bring home the block he had cut from the tree of their selection. Fantaka forgot she was a sedate married woman, and gathered wild flowers to twine in her hair and sang

happy songs, so that Radama admired her more than ever, and Bezano resolved anew to make her the kindest-looking idol he possibly could.

Back in the workshop they chatted happily while they watched the chips fly and the god take shape. It took a long time to make so large a figure, though the work was very crude and Bezano's hand was practiced in such things. Evening was falling when the idol was finished, and the twilight chill was creeping into the little shop.

"Stay and eat supper with me," urged old Bezano, gathering a handful of chips from the floor to kindle a fire. Fantaka drew near to the friendly blaze, and held out her cold hands to be warmed, while Bezano quickly put rice into the pot and soon had it cooking over the fire.

When supper was over, Radama proudly carried the idol home, after paying Bezano a sum equal to about two dollars. They had to kindle their own fire to see sufficiently to place the god in his corner. Then they lay down peacefully to sleep, assured that their house was safe under the idol's protection.

The wooden god lived a happy life for many days. Not only the best of the rice and palm oil was always offered to him, but Fantaka made garlands of fresh flowers every day to hang around his neck, and Radama built a fine shelf for him to stand on so that his feet never need rest on the floor. Never an idol was better cared for, even in the homes of the rich. He was the young couple's chief treasure.

One day an old friend called at their house.

"I am very glad to see you, Ranivo," said Fantaka. "I remember well when you lived in our village, and we were little girls and played together. Tell me all about yourself and what you have been doing all this time."

Ranivo told much of the life she had lived for some years in a large town; but most of all she spoke of a school she had attended, where white teachers showed her how to read out of a book.

"What! Can you make a book talk?" asked Fantaka. "How I would like to hear it! Have you a book of your own, Ranivo, and can you make it speak to people, as the white men do?"

"Yes," said Ranivo. "Would you like to hear me, Fantaka?" And she drew from the folds of her dress a little Bible. With just a glance at the big idol in the corner, she turned to the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah and began to read the description of the making of an idol. Fantaka listened breathlessly.

"The carpenter stretcheth out a line—he shapeth it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house." Fantaka, too, glanced at the idol. "He heweth him down cedars"—yes, so they had done, that day in the forest. "He taketh thereof, and warmeth himself"—she could almost feel the pleasant warmth rising from the chips to her chilled fingers, there in Bezano's shop. "Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread"—Bezano had cooked rice with it! "Yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto." And then he went on to say to the image, "Deliver me; for thou art my god."

Then the reader went on to tell how all this praying to an idol was in vain; how the wood that was carved into the idol was just the same as the chips that fed the fire and cooked the food, and that it could not help or save.

Fantaka was very serious that night. Radama wondered when he saw that she offered no rice to the idol. The next day she made no fresh garlands to hang upon

it; and day by day she looked at it with less respect. Ranivo was staying in the village, teaching a little school of children she had gathered; and Fantaka went often to hear her read from the book.

One night she said to Radama, "Ranivo is going to make her book speak to some of the neighbors. Let us go and hear her."

It was the same chapter that Ranivo read that night. When they went home Radama said gently to Fantaka, "Now I know why the god in the corner gets no more rice or garlands."

"Oh, Radama," said his wife, "the book speaks truth! As soon as I heard it I knew it was true; and I could not worship the image any more. Let me put him away and learn of the true God whom Ranivo tells about."

And Radama said, "I will go with you, Fantaka."

"That picture Uncle Sam?" inquired a deep voice, with a tone of anxiety.

The government agent, who was also storekeeper of the little Alaskan town, turned around. He was getting used to the childish ideas of the Eskimos, though at first he had found it hard to understand them.

It was hard work for them to understand, too, that their country had been bought by the United States. They had no idea of a government by President and Congress; but when the agent spoke of "Uncle Sam" and showed them the well-known figure in its costume of stars and stripes, they took for granted that this was the person who had purchased Alaska and who sent the supplies which were given out to them at the little store.

Mr. Carroll, the government agent, was very fond of sticking up pictures around the store. When the comic papers came from the States he cut out some of the funniest cartoons and put them on the walls.

"I need something to make me laugh," he said to himself. "This is the coldest, lonesomest, gloomiest country in winter-time that I ever saw; and these fur-wearing, greasy Eskimos are precious little company. I don't see what Uncle Sam wanted of them, anyway; I'd give all their society for one white man I could talk politics with."

Now he turned idly at the voice of his customer and found a short, stocky figure in furs standing before the latest cartoon he had posted on the wall.

"That picture Uncle Sam?" asked the Eskimo again, pointing a stubby finger at the cartoon. It showed a lank figure in a pitiable condition; the long features

and straggling beard of Uncle Sam rose above a shabby suit, patched in many places; and at the bottom appeared a pair of bare feet below the hems of trousers that were much too short. Altogether it was a picture to make anybody shiver in the cold of an Alaskan winter. It was the artist's idea of the poverty the country was coming to if some bill or other should be passed by Congress; but to the Eskimo it was Uncle Sam himself in sorry plight.

"Oh, yes! That's Uncle Sam," said the agent rather wearily. He got tired of talking to these childish people. "Looks like he's pretty hard up, doesn't it?"

"Uncle Sam got no shoes?" persisted the man.

"Not a sign of 'em," declared the agent jokingly. "Cold weather to go barefoot, isn't it?"

The Eskimo grunted, wrapped his blanket about him, took a last serious look at the picture, and stalked out into the snowy darkness.

There was much excitement in a certain Eskimo hut that night. The fur-clad wife and the plump babies listened with eyes large and round, as the head of the family told what he had seen in the store.

"Uncle Sam send us flour, send us bacon, send us much thing," he told them. "Uncle Sam take care of us, not let nobody hurt us. Mr. Carroll say so, many time. Now Uncle Sam poor, very poor. Got no fur coat"—all the black eyes rolled in astonishment—"got no cap, only old hat"—still greater surprise—" got no shoes. Feet all bare!"

No words could express the horror of the family at this dreadful state of affairs. The little wife rose from her seat by the fire and began to rummage about in the hut.

Presently she came back with a piece of the softest doeskin in her hand. Her husband, with a grunt of

approval, caught it from her and began to turn it about, as if guessing at its measurements. Next she brought out a box of colored glass beads and a rude painting outfit, also needles and thread and a large knife.

It was too late that night to do anything but plan; but they put their heads close together over the fire while they debated about colors and designs.

Two days later the agent looked up from his accounts as the door of the store flew open and his Eskimo visitor again appeared. He walked to the counter and laid down a bundle, waiting for Mr. Carroll to open it.

The agent unwrapped it, and there was a beautiful pair of moccasins. The doeskin was soft as velvet, the beading and painting made them a perfect rainbow of the loveliest colors. The agent, who had seen many pairs of moccasins, rubbed his eyes and looked again. He had never seen so fine a pair.

"Uncle Sam got no shoes," explained his caller. "Me and my wife take two days make these for him. Send them to Uncle Sam."

"Sure I will!" declared the agent heartily. "It's mighty good of you to make 'em for him. Now, just wait a bit."

From the stores on the shelves he quickly chose provisions amounting to at least double the value of the moccasins, and loaded the generous Eskimo with packages. There was great feasting in the little hut, while the family talked over the probable joy and surprise of Uncle Sam when the moccasins arrived.

"Well, I'm beat!" said the agent, sitting down to take another long look at the moccasins. "I declare if I ever thought these fellows would believe that picture was real! Poor Uncle Sam, they were sorry for him!

"I guess I won't worry so much for a white man around, after this. I wonder how many of the men that sit on store boxes and talk politics back in the States would do that much for Uncle Sam if they thought he was barefoot?

"People like these are worth trying to help, after all. I guess they'll make good citizens, if they don't learn too much about badness from the rest of us. Uncle Sam wasn't such a dunce, anyway, when he bought up this country!"

THE SCHOOLING OF MALAMOA

Two dusky figures—one bent with age, the other slender and supple—crouched over the ashes of a dying fire, in the twilight of one of the great forests of Africa.

"Tomorrow, Malamoa," spoke the wrinkled old black woman, "will be the great feast of our tribe. Then many warriors will take new wives out of the captives we have taken in war. You are fortunate, girl, for no less a warrior than Mombo, our king, has chosen you to be his wife. Early in the morning you must rise and put on all your beads and make yourself fine with flowers, for Mombo will wish his bride to be adorned as a great chief's wife should be."

The girl sat sullenly staring into the fire. Again the old woman spoke, and the soft African speech sounded harsher on her lips.

"Do you hear what I say, Malamoa?"

"Yes, I hear," said Malamoa drearily. "Mombo has many wives already. What shall I be but a slave to all of them, Zembe?"

"If you are clever," whispered Zembe, bending nearer, "you may get to be head-wife and rule all the others. Mombo likes cleverness, and you have it. You can be of great use to him, and he will take you with him on all his travels; for you can speak five African languages already, and may learn more."

"Yes, and how did I learn them?" asked Malamoa, sitting upright and speaking bitterly. "When I was just a little child, living with my mother in her grass house, there came a party of warriors who were enemies of my father. They were not strong enough to

attack our whole village, but they hid in the long grass near our hut and watched. Then my mother gave me the water jar to fill at the river, and while I walked singing through the grass those bad men rose up and caught me. They bound my mouth so that I could not cry, and for revenge on my father they carried me away, for I was a strong and healthy child, and when grown I would be worth many goats.

"Three times I was sold, and each time I brought a larger price. Many suns I have lived the life of a slave; I have walked more miles than I can count, bent under heavy loads that my masters placed on my back. I learned their speech, for it was my only defence; if I did not know what they said to me I would be beaten for disobedience.

"Now Mombo will make me his slave. I must travel more weary miles, and learn more hateful languages. I am to be grateful, and dress myself in flowers, because I am to enter on a life like that. No, Zembe, I will not!"

"Then Mombo will kill you, foolish girl," said old Zembe. "What will you do when his anger comes down on you like a storm on the forest?"

"I am not going to be here when his anger comes down," said Malamoa coolly. "I am going to run away tonight."

Zembe raised her hands in horror.

"Run away? And where will you run that Mombo will not find you?"

"I care little where," said Malamoa stubbornly, "but I am not going to stay here; and you are not going to tell of me, either. Creep into your hut, Zembe, and go to sleep. When morning comes I will not be here, and you will know nothing about it. Mombo will not hurt

you; you are old and wise, and he thinks you a witch woman. He will think I have been stolen away; surely he will never think I would be so foolish as to run away from the great honor of being the king's wife."

The young voice was hard and scornful as she spoke; she pointed to the grass hut, and old Zembe, trembling and muttering, crept in and lay down to restless sleep.

* * * *

"What have you found, Kanju?"

The long line of bearers who carried the white trader's boxes through the bush came to a halt.

"It is a girl, master," said the head bearer. "We thought she was dead, but she stirs and moans. She is almost starved."

"How did she come here?" asked the trader idly.

"A runaway slave, perhaps. She has the marks of many beatings, yet she is dressed in good cloth, with many beads. Who can tell? See, now she is sitting up."

"Give her some food if she wants it," said the trader. "Is she worth taking along?"

"She would be worth something to her master, if we could find him," said the bearer. "She is too weak and thin to attract a buyer."

"Well, then, we can't be bothered with her," said the trader impatiently. "We have stopped too long already. Here comes another traveler, and now the path will be blocked."

The bearers of the newcomer were not burdened so heavily, nor were they so many as the train of the trader. Two natives carried a white man in a hammock; two others bore his modest luggage.

"What have we here?" asked the stranger, peering over the edge of the hammock with kindly eyes. The trader's men quickly told him the story of the waif they had found in the path.

With a quick movement the white man was out of the hammock and on his feet.

"Put her in my hammock," he commanded. "My journey is almost done, and I can easily walk the rest of the way. I am from the Mission you passed a few miles back," he explained to the trader, "or rather, I am going back to it after a week's tour among the villages. This poor girl, who would only be a hindrance to you, will be cared for by the women at our Mission school. She surely needs food and care," he added with pity in his voice, lifting the drooping head of the girl, who was falling asleep from weakness, with a piece of bread half eaten in her hand.

She raised her heavy eyelids as the men laid her in the hammock.

"Who are you?" she whispered to the missionary, looking up with wonder into his kind face.

"I am God's man," he said simply, in the speech of the native. "And who are you?"

"Malamoa," she answered, curling wearily down in the hammock.

* * * *

"You are surely in difficulties today," said the missionary's wife, looking up from her sewing. "I have heard you sigh six times in the last half hour."

"The work grows harder and harder," declared her husband, pushing away the papers that heaped his desk. "I should not have attempted this native grammar and dictionary, with all the other work I have to do; but I am so anxious to give these people the Bible

in their own language so that they can read it for themselves. But when they have no written language, and I must write it down for them from the sounds they make—well, you know what a task it has been.

"Those Bantu boys who came here to help me are so ignorant that they cannot give me words for half the ideas I want to express. When I ask them the word for this or that they look foolish, and say, 'Don't know, God-man; what you mean by that?' "

"Why don't you try Malamoa?" inquired his wife.

"Malamoa?" he asked in amazement.

"Yes. She speaks several languages, for she can understand everybody that comes to the school, no matter from what tribe. She is very shy about letting us know it; for some reason she seems ashamed of it. But she is a true Christian girl now, I believe; and if she knew she could help you I think she would be willing. And she is as bright as a new dollar."

"Call her!" said the missionary, leaning back wearily in his chair.

It was a different Malamoa from the draggled waif he had found in the forest who greeted his eyes in a few moments. Three years in the Mission school had wrought great changes in her. The smoothly braided hair, tied with a broad ribbon; the neat calico dress, made by her own hands; above all, the look of trust and contentment on her face, showed that the hardships of her past had given place to happy usefulness in her new life.

"Malamoa," said the missionary abruptly, "how many languages can you speak?"

He spoke the words in the Bantu language, and before she realized it Malamoa had answered in the same language, "Five."

Then a startled look spread over her face, and she turned as if to run away. The missionary's wife held her gently back.

"Tell us, dear Malamoa," she said kindly, "why you have concealed from us that you had this great treasure which you might have been putting to use for your Master, Jesus? Will you let us work to write these languages with the ignorant help of untaught boys, when you might make the task so much easier?"

Malamoa's tears began to fall.

"Oh, dear teacher," she said, "I have hated the languages I knew! Every one was like the marks of the whip that I shall carry on my back as long as I live. I learned them in slavery, because I was helpless till I knew them. But if you knew the terrible pictures of my slavery they bring back to me! I was ashamed to know so many tongues; they showed how many times I had been a slave. And I felt it all the more since I have gone to school here, and got book learning."

"Malamoa," said her teacher very gently, "you began to go to school long before you came here. Out on the trail in the bush it was God who set you lessons in those languages, so that now you might be able to help us teach many people His truth. That was part of your schooling, though you did not know it. Now He asks you to use your knowledge for Him. Will you do it?"

Malamoa's dark face glowed with delight. She said not a word, but with a swift motion she seated herself on the floor at the missionary's feet, folded her hands in her lap, and looked up eagerly, ready to answer his questions.

KATO AND THE SIN-BEARER

Kato was playing by the river. He did not play alone very often, for there were many other children in the village where he lived, and the river bank was their favorite meeting place. They liked to sail boats on it; they liked to follow up the little streams that ran into it, back into the fields where the lotus lilies grew. There the boys would dig up the sweet lotus roots to eat, while the girls would carry the broad lotus leaves for parasols.

But today there was no laughing crowd of children by the river, for a guest was in the village—an unwelcome guest, named smallpox.

All through the East this visitor was so common that it was considered a children's disease, just as mumps and measles are with us; because in those countries hardly anybody used to grow up without having had it. In that day nobody in that part of the world knew anything about vaccination.

It happened that Kato was almost the only child in the village who was not sick. Nobody tried to keep him from the others, for there was no such thing as quarantine, either. In fact, his mother was rather cross because he did not take it; she wanted him to "have it over" while the others were having it. He had visited a number of his friends, but they were not good company and would not even try to play. So Kato felt very lonely and somewhat abused as he sat throwing pebbles into the water.

As the grass waved in the wind something white caught his eye, lodged in the stem of a tall weed. Usually he would have been too busy to notice it, but

now he was so tired of doing nothing that he strolled idly down to see what it was.

Just a bit of paper twisted around the stem of the weed; but as he was about to turn away he saw a name written on it:

"Hiro."

That was all. He wondered if Hiro was a boy like himself; whether he had anyone to play with; and how his name happened to be on this bit of paper. Perhaps there was more on the other side.

He unwrapped the paper carefully from the stem; it was wet, and he tried not to tear it. It must have floated down the river—who could tell how far?

Now the paper was loose. He unfolded it—and stood staring in dismay. It was a rude imitation of a human form clad in a loose kimono, such as the Japanese wear.

Kato knew well what it was. On a certain day in June, now several weeks ago, people all over Japan had gone to worship at the shrines of their gods; and on that day the priests had given to all the worshipers little pieces of paper like these. They were called "sin-bearers."

The worshiper would take the sin-bearer home with him. The little figure represented himself; and as he put it in his house he believed that while it was there all his sins would leave him and pass into the paper image.

Several days later he would take back the little sin-bearer to the temple. On the same day all the other sin-bearers were brought back to the priest. The people would pay the priest some money to rid them of their sins. Then the priest would say a prayer and throw all the sin-bearers into the river. As they floated away the people thought all the sins of the year went with them.

Now somebody by the name of Hiro had thrown away his sins, but the river had refused to carry them to the sea! Instead, he, Kato, had picked them up. They had doubtless been cast there for that very purpose by the gods. He had never thought of a sin-bearer when he found the paper, though he had seen hundreds of them floating down the river only a few weeks before.

He wondered if Hiro had been very wicked. Perhaps he had been a thief or a murderer! What if all those terrible sins had entered into himself? He tried to throw the paper into the river, but it was wet, and clung to his fingers. He shook it off, and the breeze carried it right back to his feet. There was no doubt of it—Hiro's sins had taken up their abode with poor little Kato!

That night his mother heard him muttering in his sleep, and the next morning she was pleased, because he had taken the smallpox at last. But later she grew frightened, for Kato was very sick, and in his delirium he kept crying out, "Take it away! The sin-bearer! The sin-bearer!"

* * * * *

"Our boy does not grow strong, as he should," said Kato's father about six weeks later. The weather was very hot, and the other children were out playing again; but Kato sat listless and weak and would talk to nobody.

"The sickness was very bad," said his mother. "See how he is marked! If he would eat he would get strong again."

"Let me take him up the river to my brother's home," suggested his father. "It is much cooler up there in the mountains."

So Kato went on the journey, not caring much about

it. If he could only forget about Hiro and his sins! But, in spite of his troubles, the mountain air began to make him hungry, and soon he was strong enough to walk about again.

Then he began to go to all the wayside shrines and every holy place in the neighborhood, and pray to have those dreadful sins removed. Once he tried to make a pilgrimage to a shrine far up on the mountain, and was carried home half dead by a man who found him fainting on the rocks.

All the time it seemed to him it was harder than ever to be good. He wanted to be cross and quarrelsome; he could not remember to be polite; he was not at all like himself, and he laid it all to the sin-bearer. His uncle and aunt were very patient with him, because they knew he had been so ill; but poor Kato was very miserable.

"May Kato go to our school today for a visit?" asked Ono, a neighbor's son, looking in one bright autumn morning.

"If he wishes," said his aunt, looking over at Kato as he sat idly under a tree. Kato did not care whether he stayed or went; but Ono promised to take good care of him, and his aunt advised him to go. Perhaps he would feel brighter if he played with the boys.

The little school was taught by an American lady. Kato did not know she was a Christian; he wondered greatly at the songs the school sang, but something about the place was pleasant and comforting, and he liked it.

At noon he met a number of the boys. He was too weak to play games, and was glad when one boy came and sat beside him for a chat.

"My name is Hiro," said the boy, and wondered at the start Kato gave. Kato was afraid the boy would

think his manners were bad, so he had to explain; and presently he had told him all the story of the piece of paper.

"That was my sin-bearer!" cried Hiro. "I was so afraid the gods would not know it carried my sins that I wrote my name on it! But, O Kato, now I know about a better Sin-bearer than those! Ask your uncle to let you come every day to our school and we will tell you all about Him."

So it happened that Kato spent the whole winter with his uncle and aunt, and went to the mission school with Ono and Hiro.

And on Easter morning, when the little school house was trimmed with flowers and a missionary preacher had come to tell the people the resurrection story, Kato sat close to Hiro and listened with all his heart, and after the service he said very softly to his friend, "Now, Hiro, I have really found your Sin-bearer!"

"Have you brought them, Cho Ling?" "How many did you get?" "What did you say to the book people?" "How did you know how many books to ask for?"

An eager little knot of Chinese villagers had gathered around their townsman, who stood among them travel stained and weary, bent beneath a heavy bundle.

"Let me come into your shop, Hu Peng," he answered, "and open this pack of books. I am ready to drop. Remember, I have come thirty miles with this pack on my back, and uphill nearly all the way. I did not get as many as I wanted to, but I got all the money would buy. You know, we did not know the price, so we could only send what we had; now we must make them go around as far as we can and share them with each other."

"But tell us about the Bible House at Hong-Kong," put in an eager voice. "What did you say there, and what did they do?"

"There is not much to tell," said Cho Ling wearily, taking Testament after Testament from his pack. "It is a place with books in the window, books on the shelves, books everywhere. I went in and laid down the money, and I just said, 'Please give me as many copies of the Jesus-book as that will buy.' They said, 'Where did you come from?' Then I told them I had walked from here, thirty miles down the mountain. They said, 'How did you know about the Jesus-book?' I said a Jesus-man had met me once on the road and talked to me, and had given me a Jesus-book. I told them how I had read it, first to myself, and then aloud

to you in the evenings, and how you had wanted books like it for yourselves and had sent me to buy them. All the time they were making up this big pack for me. When it was ready I took it on my back, set off for home, and here I am."

Cho Ling had now unpacked all the books and was distributing them as best he could.

"Ho Li, you live far off from the village; you must have one, for you cannot easily get to hear another one read. Chang Lo, you have a large family; I will give you one, and you can read it to them all. But you, and you," he said to the two men who presented themselves, "are father and son and live in one house; a single book must do for you, for there are many who will be disappointed if they get none.

"Wang Tao," he went on, to a hollow-cheeked, bright-eyed man who stood trying to suppress a perpetual hacking cough, "you must have a book, for you are sick, and there is much comfort in it for sick people."

Wang Tao bowed and grasped the book eagerly.

"Thanks, thanks, Cho Ling!" he exclaimed. "I want one very much. Perhaps I shall not have many days to read in it, but I have heard you read in yours about Jesus, who said there was a place prepared in His Father's house for the people who go from this world, if they believe in Him. I want to read that part again. Can you show me where it is, Cho Ling?"

Cho Ling quickly turned to the Gospel of John, with a look of compassion on his face. Wang Tao carefully marked the place and went slowly away with his precious book, coughing painfully as he went, while Cho proceeded with his distribution.

It was not many weeks before a sad little procession went out of Wang Tao's house. He had found the

home of the many mansions. Mrs. Tao wailed and lamented like a dutiful wife, but Wang had been sick a long time and she had been expecting to lose him, so her grief was consoled by the thought that he had seemed very content to go. How much of his willingness was due to the fact that Mrs. Tao had a very sharp tongue, that lady did not trouble herself to inquire.

Months passed by and Wang Tao's resting-place was covered with wild flowers of spring. The home that had once been his was blossoming out, too, for his eldest son was about to be married and bring home his bride. Mrs. Tao determined to do everything she could to make the old house appear new. A mother-in-law would have a hard time to "save her face" if the new daughter should carry tales home to her people about the shabbiness of the house she had come into.

"I shall send for Tuan Shi," she said to herself. "He shall paper these rooms and hide the holes in the walls."

So Tuan Shi, the little paperhanger and general handy man of the village, was sent for, and he came willingly enough, for business had been very dull that season.

Wall paper in a Chinese home does not mean a dressing anew of the rooms in beautiful tints, while a fascinated family watches the long strips unroll and appear as if by magic on the walls. The poorer people are glad to plaster their walls with any sort of paper they can get; it patches up holes and makes the house warmer.

So the paper Mrs. Tao supplied for the purpose was mostly newspapers of every kind she was able to gather; but Tuan Shi put it on very neatly, and it

really looked much better than the old smoke-stained, broken walls.

"Honorable Mrs. Tao," said the little man at last, presenting himself before the mistress of the house, "the paper you gave me is not quite enough to finish the last wall."

Mrs. Tao was in a quandary; she had used up all the papers she had saved or could beg from her neighbors. She was exceedingly thrifty and it vexed her to think of buying any paper. She rummaged in all her cubby-holes, and at last emerged triumphant.

"Here is an old book," she said, "that poor Wang bought just before he died. What he wanted of it I don't know, when he had such a little while to live; but buy it he did, and it is fortunate for me. The leaves are small, but perhaps there will be enough to cover that little corner."

"Oh, yes," said Tuan Shi, taking the book. "I think that will be plenty."

Tuan Shi's paste was running low also. It was a great deal of trouble to go and boil some more just for that little space. He stood looking at the bucket, and presently made up his mind to stir in a little more water. The paste would be very thin if he did; more than likely it would not hold well, and before long the paper in that corner would begin to come off. But he would have his money by that time; and, at any rate, he could blame it on the book and say the pages were too highly glazed to take the paste well.

He tore a leaf from the book and held it up against the wall to estimate how many pages it would take to cover the space. Suddenly some words on the page caught his eye and he seemed compelled to read them:

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men."

It was just as if somebody had spoken to him. He gasped as though water had been thrown in his face.

"The wall paper talks to me!" he muttered. Then he laughed at himself; but he picked up the pastebucket, and he didn't go to the well with it—he went to make more paste.

He came back presently and found his small son, who had followed him from home to tell him that supper was ready, busily engaged in picking loose the last sheet he had pasted on the wall. One corner of it hung in shreds. Tuan raised his hand with the heavy scissors in it, and they were not far from the head of the unsuspecting Lao—for Tuan was a man of violent temper—when he caught sight of another leaf of the book which Lao had managed to stick on the wall with the paste he had found on the brush. Again the wall paper spoke to his eyes and heart: "Be ye angry, and sin not."

The scissors dropped to the floor. Tuan turned white at the thought of what he had been about to do. He pulled Lao gently away, though a sheet of sticky wall paper came along with him, and started him home, promising to come soon.

Reaching into his pocket for his rule, he touched the smooth skin of an apple. In the room he had passed through when he went out to mix the paste a large dish of fruit had been standing, and Tuan had helped himself, with half a thought of that same small Lao at whom he had just been so furious.

As his fingers touched it his eyes were still fastened on the page from the book, sticking crookedly on the wall, and this is what he saw: "Let him that stole, steal no more."

That was too much for Tuan. Hastening back, he laid the apple carefully on the plate. Three times the

wall paper had spoken to him. He determined that he must have that book, but it was not his and he was not going to risk another rebuke from it.

In one of his own pockets was a picture paper which he had picked up on the street; a tourist had thrown it away. Tuan liked those papers, especially the ones with colored pictures. He had meant it for an evening's enjoyment at home—several evenings, in fact, for Tuan was a slow reader. But it would make a glorious finish to the wall, that colored supplement; Mrs. Tao would consider that it more than paid for the book she thought so worthless.

The colored pictures stayed on Mrs. Tao's wall and the little book went home with Tuan.

It was a year later, when the missionary who first gave Cho Ling his Testament hunted up the mountain village to see what had become of Cho, that he found a whole community ready for baptism; and among them was one Tuan Shi and his whole family, who declared, in what the missionary thought very strange talk, that they had come to know the Jesus-story from some paper on a wall that had talked to father one day.

THE SHOES OF LING LI

"One, two, three, and an old cow's eye;
If a cow's eye's blind she'll surely die.
A piece of skin and a melon, too,
If you have money I'll sell to you;
But if you're without
I'll put you out!"

The little circle of Chinese girls sitting on the ground in the mission-school yard was broken as one little girl jumped up. The rhyme they had been repeating in concert had ended, and the girl in the center, who was doing the "counting out," had tapped the foot of Me Ing at the last syllable, and Me Ing was "out." She hopped up and the circle closed as the counting began again.

The old cow must have died a great many times before all the girls but one were counted out, and many little blue-clad figures were hopping about, waiting to see who would be the last.

"Ling Li! It's Ling Li!" they cried as the little girl next to Ling Li rose, laughing aloud. Ling Li was "It." All the girls came circling about her as she sat still on the ground. The leader snatched off Ling Li's little cloth-topped shoe and slapped the sole of Ling Li's foot with it. Then every girl could have a turn at slapping Ling Li's foot with her shoe; and then they would all sit down and "count out" again, till another foot was left alone to pay the forfeit.

Ling Li squirmed and giggled while her foot was being slapped. It tickled rather than hurt; the shoes were not hard like the American shoes teacher wore. But, oh, how Ling Li admired those shiny, brown American shoes!

They were big, very big compared with the bound feet of Chinese ladies; but how quickly they carried teacher about, and how comfortable they looked!

Ling Li slipped her shoe on again and strolled away from the group of players. She stood a long time by the schoolhouse steps looking gravely at her feet.

"What is the matter, Ling Li?" asked teacher from within. "The girls didn't slap you too hard, did they?"

The little girl shook her head.

"Is anything the matter, dear?" asked Miss Bancroft, seeing the downcast look on the child's face. But Ling Li only shook her head again. Something was the matter, but she couldn't tell it to teacher. She had only heard it whispered at home last night, and she didn't know whether she had heard it right or not. It was too dreadful a thing to talk about, anyway.

This is what Ling Li had heard her grandmother whisper to her mother the night before—only a few words, but how much they meant to the little girl:

"Ling Li is getting very big. She runs and plays like a boy at that foreign school. Her feet must soon be bound or they will grow like the foreign teacher's, and nobody will ever want to marry her."

Ling Li knew what that meant. Her little feet would be bent and bandaged out of shape, to make of them the "golden lilies" which Chinese ladies were supposed to have. She would never run and play any more. She would suffer terribly for a long time; everybody knew the saying that "for every bound foot there is a bedful of tears." Then her feet would lose their feeling, and she would hobble about on them the rest of her life, a useless little cripple.

And all in order that she might be married. Perhaps it was true that she would never get a husband if she had big feet; teacher had them, and she was not married,

so it must be true. But Ling Li did not want to be married. She wanted to run and play in the schoolyard, and learn lessons from teacher. She studied very hard that afternoon, because she didn't know how many more days she would have in school.

And the very next morning Miss Bancroft asked "Where is Ling Li?" and nobody answered; but everyone could guess. Teacher guessed, too, as soon as she remembered Ling Li's grave little face, and how she had stood by the school door looking at her feet.

The next morning teacher started early to school, on purpose to go around by Ling Li's house. There on the steps sat a white-faced little girl, with dark rings under her eyes. Two nights and a day with bound feet are enough to make a little girl heavy-eyed. Ling Li thought she must have cried almost her bedful of tears already.

She greeted teacher bravely enough.

"I cannot come any more to the school, dear teacher," she said; then words failed her. She pointed down to the poor little feet and hid her face in the crook of her arm.

"May I see your mother, Ling Li?" asked the teacher, patting the shiny black head. Ling Li moved aside to let the teacher enter.

Mrs. Li was almost as sad-eyed as her little girl that morning. All the memory of her own pain and sorrow when her feet were bound came back to her as she listened in the night to the slow sobbing of Ling.

Teacher told her what a dear little scholar Ling was, how fast she was learning, what a happy time she had at school. Wasn't it possible to leave her free at least a little longer? Maybe she could learn to be a teacher, and that would be a proud thing for the Li family, and would bring in many cash as well.

Mrs. Li was ready to listen, but Grandmother Li objected.

"All girls must endure it," she said, "unless they are of the coolies and have no pride, but work hard for a living. Ling will marry a wealthy man some day if she has golden lilies, for you see what a fine girl she is. Certainly her feet must be bound; they were growing so big that already it was very hard to do anything with them."

"Well," said Miss Bancroft, "it's too bad for if she went on going to school, some day she might go to college; and since she is so bright, some day she might be one of the girls chosen to go across the sea and study in America. But, of course, if her feet were bound that could never happen, for they would not let her go to America like that."

"What's that?" asked grandmother. "Do not even the married women in your country have golden lilies?"

"All the ladies," said teacher impressively, "even the President's wife, wear shoes like mine," and she set her russet-clad foot down firmly on the floor as she spoke.

The two women looked curiously at the foot. After all, it looked very neat, and such a beautiful color.

"Your American shoes," ventured Mrs. Li, "are very nice for American ladies. How do you get them off and on, or do they grow fast?"

Then the teacher was glad she had started early, for she sat on the edge of the brick bed and unlaced her shoe, took it off and let the women feel it and peer inside it, and laced it back again. All the time their eyes grew bigger with wonder, and their smiles more friendly. At last she stood up and made her bid for Ling Li's freedom.

"If you will let Ling Li come back to school, and not bind her feet," she said, knowing that a little pair of ears at the door were drinking in every word, "I will get her a pair of American shoes like mine."

"Like the President's wife wears?" asked grandmother, quite carried away by this vision of glory.

"Just such shoes," promised Miss Bancroft, "as the President's daughters wore when they were little girls."

* * * *

It took several days to send to Canton for those American shoes, and teacher held her breath when she thought that Grandmother Li might change her mind before they came.

But the next morning after she had sent the package around to the Li home she started early again and walked around that way. As she drew near, suddenly a little blue-clad form came darting out of the door and danced up the street to meet her. There were no dark circles under Ling Li's eyes this morning and no sobs in her voice.

And yet, somehow, she choked over the words when she tried to speak. She wanted to tell teacher how glad she was to be going back to school, but only one word would come, and she said it over and over, holding tight to teacher's hand and pointing to her own little feet:

"Unbound! Unbound!"

And teacher looked down at the bright new pair of American shoes, and she too found it hard to speak. But she took firm hold of the little girl's hand, and she and Ling Li went happily to school together.

THE VICEROY'S VISITORS

(RETOLD FROM THE MEMOIRS OF LI HUNG CHANG)

Upon a dusty Chinese road two travelers went trudging along. One who knew the people of that country would have seen that they were not Chinese, but had come from Japan. They were tired and footsore, and one of them stumbled now and then as he walked.

"Courage, Taro!" said the man, taking the boy by the arm after one of these stumbles. "It is not much farther now. Shall we rest awhile?"

"Oh, father," said the boy, with the sound of tears in his voice, "why did we ever come so far? How big China is! Must we go on? Maybe the viceroy will not receive us."

"Poor boy!" said the father pityingly. "You are too young for such a journey; I should not have brought you, but I thought it would be a chance for you to see the great Li Hung Chang. Besides, it is a mission of honor for us."

"I know," said Taro, bravely swallowing his tears. The word "honor" is like the sound of a trumpet to a Japanese, young or old. "But I am so tired and—and homesick! I would give anything to be back in Ketuki again."

"See, Taro," said his father, "it is nearly as far to go back now as it will be after our journey is completed. Be brave a little longer and we shall go back with our task accomplished. Would you have me tell the church in Ketuki that we were almost at the viceroy's door and had to turn back?"

"No, father," said Taro sturdily. "I will pray to be helped, and try not to hinder you any more."

Three hours later a travel-worn pair stood at the entrance to the viceroy's court, knocking for admission.

"What is your business?" asked the gate-keeper. "The viceroy is ill and cannot be disturbed by beggars."

Taro trembled at the harsh words; but his father said with gentle dignity, "We have not come to take, but to give. We are sent from the Christian church at Ketuki, in Japan, to bring medicines for the viceroy's illness. Will you ask if he will see us?"

Presently the porter returned with a more respectful manner and unbarred the gate. The viceroy had ordered that his visitors be admitted at once.

For twenty-four years the great Li Hung Chang had held audience in that court. Here had come, to use his own words, "royalties and dukes, ambassadors, ministers, murderers, robbers and beggars." Here he received the noble and judged the base; but never had anyone entered his court on such an errand as Mr. Sato and his little son.

After the usual ceremonies the viceroy expressed his surprise at the long journey which the two had taken for his sake.

"All the way from Ketuki, in Japan, you say? Yes, I remember, the Christians at Ketuki sent me flowers for my sick-room at the beginning of my illness."

"And every day we talk about Your Excellency," said Mr. Sato, "and pray to our God for your recovery."

"I wonder," said Li Hung Chang thoughtfully, "if this is because Christianity teaches such things? But now you are my guests and must taste food, for I know you are tired and hungry."

What a delicious meal that was! Boiled chicken, chicken tongue on crackers, rice-cakes and tea were set before the hungry travelers, and they did full justice to the viceroy's hospitality. All the time he talked kindly and simply to them, trying to make them feel at home, and

expressing again and again his thanks for the medicines they had brought, and the friendly spirit that had prompted their visit.

"You must stay with me and be my guests for a few days," he urged.

But Mr. Sato looked at poor Taro, who was almost falling asleep over his food, and replied, "Your Excellency, more than once on the road I almost turned back; for this little son of mine was weary and homesick almost unto death, and begged me to take him home again. But for Your Excellency's sake and the honor of our mission, he toiled bravely on, and has arrived here ready to drop. As soon as may be we must start on our return."

"So be it," said the viceroy, looking compassionately at the sleepily nodding little head, and not at all offended at Taro's lack of manners. "He is a brave boy, and worthy of his father. But come, and he shall choose what gift he will have to carry home with him."

It was a big bundle of presents of all kinds for the people at Ketuki that the viceroy insisted on sending with them; besides a gift of two hundred taels in money for the mission, and a like amount to pay the expenses of the journey. Mr. Sato did not want to take this, but the viceroy would hear no refusal.

"You must hire a conveyance; the little boy cannot walk all that way back again."

Before they left the court one more thing happened, which left the viceroy with tears in his keen old eyes. After the customary farewells Mr. Sato said to him:

"Your Excellency, have we your honored permission to pray for you?"

"Certainly," said Li Hung Chang, supposing they meant the daily prayer offered for him at Ketuki, of which they had told him. But Mr. Sato spoke in an undertone to Taro, and in an instant they were both kneeling at the

door, praying aloud for the viceroy. A moment more and they were gone, with low bows and courteous farewells.

That night the great man wrote the story of his visitors down in his journal, and that is how we know about it. After telling all about the visit, he added these words:

"I think this Christianity makes poor and lowly people bold and unafraid. I could not keep my heart from thumping in my bosom as I watched that poor man and his frightened little boy praying to God—the God that will deal with me and with them and with all mankind—that I might be well of my injuries. I was sorry to see them go.

"Poor, good Mr. Sato, all the way from Japan to offer a Christian prayer for the 'heathen' old viceroy! I did not know that anyone outside my own family cared enough about me for such a thing. I do not love the Japanese, but perhaps Christianity would help them!"

And Taro, riding at ease along the homeward road, whispered sleepily to his father:

"I am glad we came. Do you think God has made the viceroy well yet?"

UNCLE SEN'S THREE BAGS

Third Brother sat on the river bank watching the ducks paddle about. It wasn't a very big river, up in that part of the country; but it was big enough to make the ducks quite safe from Third Brother when they were out in the middle of it, and that was a point for ducks to consider, even without the added pleasures of swimming and diving. Third Brother could not swim; he was afraid of the water. The ducks were glad of that.

Not that Third Brother was a cruel boy. He had no special desire to hurt the ducks, but ducks have such beautiful long wing feathers, and Third Brother wanted some. It was his first term in school—the mission-school, taught by the foreign lady. She was teaching her pupils to write the funny Chinese characters with a tiny brush dipped in India ink, and Third Brother was learning, as a good pupil should, but it was very slow work.

Sometimes, when the teacher sat at her desk and all the rest were busy, Third Brother looked up shyly from his work and watched the foreign lady. She was doing something that puzzled him, yet he liked to watch her do it, because her face always looked then as if it were going to break into a smile. He asked her one day what she was doing when she looked so happy, and she said she was writing letters home to her people in America.

Third Brother knew nothing about America or the people there, but he thought that kind of letter writing must be very pleasant, to make the teacher's face so bright. It must be the way she did it—not with a brush, as they were doing, in slow, laborious strokes, but with a little black stick that fairly flew over the paper. Third Brother decided he would learn to write that way; but how could he get a little black stick like teacher's?

One day he happened to be standing by the desk, waiting for a new brush, when teacher was having trouble with her pen. "Oh dear," she said, laying it down, "this old pen is almost past writing any more! I expect when it gives out entirely I shall have to catch a duck and make a pen out of one of its quills."

She was speaking very low, just to herself, and never thought that anyone was listening; but Third Brother had both ears wide open, and his eyes and mouth, too. That was the thing for him to do, if pens could be made from quills; he would catch a duck, pull some of its best feathers and take them to teacher; and she would be so pleased that she would make a writing-stick for him, too, and show him how to do the happy writing.

Third Brother's people, unfortunately, had no ducks. But Uncle Sen had a whole flock of them. Uncle Sen was the rich relative of Third Brother's mother. He had no children except one young man, who was away at school; he and Mrs. Sen lived all alone and kept many ducks. They would not be thought rich at all in America, and their house would look small and mean to us; but to Third Brother it seemed a palace. Uncle Sen could easily spare a few duck feathers and never miss them.

So Third Brother, whenever he could slip away by himself, tried to catch a duck. But they always stayed near the river, and Third Brother's legs were very short. They came to know him, and as soon as he came in sight, heading for the river bank, they headed for it also and always reached it first. Once out on the river, they could feel safe from Third Brother's attempts.

While Third Brother sat idly watching the ducks Uncle Sen was very busy in his house by the river. This was the day when he counted up his beans, and that was a serious performance for Uncle Sen.

The rich uncle was a very religious man, after the man-

ner of those who follow the great Confucius, China's famous teacher. Confucius had said that a man must try always to do what was right, and avoid doing things that were wrong. Uncle Sen had very clear ideas about what things were right and what were wrong, and he had his own private system of keeping accounts with his conscience.

On a little shelf in his house, just below the small shrine of his ancestors, he kept three bags. The one on the right, at the beginning of each month, was filled with black beans; the one on the left with yellow beans; the middle one was empty.

Each day Uncle Sen counted up, as honestly as he knew how, the deeds he had done that day. If he had been angry or had forgotten to say his prayers or had envied—as he was often tempted to do—someone who had more sons than he had, he would put a black bean in the middle bag. If he had given a coin to a beggar or saved a fly from a spider's web a yellow bean went into the bag in the middle.

At the end of the month he counted the beans in the middle bag. If there were more black beans than yellow ones his conscience began to trouble him. He was in debt and must do something to even up the score. Sometimes he would make special offerings before the tablet of his ancestors; often he would perform acts of mercy, such as buying live fish in the market and setting them free in the river.

The strange thing was that, though he often caught himself looking with envy over at the little house where his sister lived, when her three healthy boys were playing together after school, and then had to pay a black bean for wishing he had one of them to fill the place of the son who was away at school, it never occurred to him that he might have earned many yellow beans by doing something kind for the little nephews.

Today he sat busily counting the beans, for it was the last day of the month. He felt quite well satisfied with himself, for there were many yellow beans and few black ones this time. Truly, he had been a good man of late, a true disciple of the wise Confucius.

Suddenly a great racket arose down by the river. It sounded as if all the ducks were quacking at once; and so they were, all except the big drake. Third Brother had been experimenting with a piece of rope on the end of a stick, and had been only too successful.

Uncle Sen rushed out, upsetting all the beans as he did so. There on the bank, pulling for dear life, was Third Brother. In his hands was the stick he had found, with the bit of rope attached. In the water struggled the drake, with the rope looped tightly about his neck. He splashed and strangled, and all the ducks flapped squawking about him, helpless to set him free.

Uncle Sen saw the sunlight grow red before his eyes. In a great rage he ran down the bank, and dealt Third Brother a blow that sent the little fellow whirling out into the stream among the ducks. At the same time he snatched the rope, pulled the drake ashore and tore the choking noose from the lustrous neck.

It was not until the drake was free that the red mist cleared from before Uncle Sen's eyes. Then he heard shouts and saw First Brother flinging himself into the water. It was not a wide stream, but there were deep spots in it, and Third Brother had gone down twice.

Uncle Sen watched the two boys in agony of mind. He had never meant to drown the little mischief-maker. What would he do if Third Brother—no, there!—see!—they were coming ashore, safe, but very wet.

Uncle Sen's philosophy, learned from the great Confucius, failed him utterly. He sat down on the bank suddenly with a very white face. What bagful of black beans

could account for such a moment of unbridled anger? What coins given to beggars, or captive fish set free, could atone for the killing of his nephew, which would have been his crime if First Brother had come too late? He bowed his head on his hands and felt himself to be not Mr. Sen, the rich and wise and good, but just a poor old man, with a wicked temper he could not control.

First Brother came out again at last, having carried Third Brother, whimpering, to his mother, and heard the whole story of the teacher who wanted duck feathers to do her writing. First Brother had been five years at the Mission school and he was a Christian; some day he hoped to be a preacher. He felt very sorry for poor Uncle Sen when he saw him sitting hiding his face in his hands.

"Uncle," he said softly, "I know how bad you feel inside; I have felt so often. I think the Mission teacher could tell you what would take the bad feelings away. Jesus can do it, Uncle Sen. Won't you come and hear about Him?"

And First Brother never understood just what his uncle meant when he looked up with quivering lips and answered, "Perhaps it would be better than beans."

"But, do you know," said Poona, her little dark face puckered in anxious thought, "it seems to me it is not right that all those American girls send us presents every year for the Jesus' Birthday, and we never send any to them."

"Oh, Poona!" exclaimed Oaksie. "What could we send them that they would want? They are rich girls, over in America, and eat meat and cakes every day, while we are very poor and live on rice. We have nothing to send."

The little circle of Korean mission school-girls nodded gravely.

"But it is true," added Moksie from the other side of the group. "Jesus' Birthday means goodwill, and that is what the teacher-lady says. But how can we show that we have goodwill, if we get presents all the time and never give any?"

"I would like to send Jesus' Birthday presents to those girls, too, if I could," said Oaksie. "If all the Jesus' Birthday keeps on being sent over here, some day they will have no more in America, and that would be very sad. I wish we could send some of it back to those girls; but how can we do it, Poona?"

"Those girls are rich, maybe," said Poona slowly; "but perhaps we have some things they do not have. One day the teacher-lady was out in the bazaar shopping, and I was with her. She bought a little embroidered bag, and she said to me, 'This is for my little niece in America. She has never seen a bag like this, with such odd little birds and animals embroidered on it; she will be very proud to have a bag that came from over the sea and she will show it to all her schoolmates."

The faces began to brighten all around the circle.

"I have a piece of green silk," said Moksie. "It would make a bag; and I can embroider too."

"I could make a little book to hold needles, with a pattern worked on it in beads," said Oaksie.

"I could dress a doll," said another girl, and still another declared, "I can make a case to hold a thimble."

Poona rose to her feet with a beaming face. "I knew we could do it," she said. "Now, girls, it is summer, and Jesus' Birthday is a long way off, but it will not be too long, for we must make our presents very carefully, so that the American girls will be proud to show them to their friends, and say, 'This is the work those girls did for us whom we have been sending presents to all these years.' Besides," she added seriously, "it would not be right to give a Jesus' Birthday present that was not the very best we could make, because you know the teacher-lady says it is just the same as giving it to Him. So they must be very nicely made. And then it will take many, many weeks to send them over the sea; so I think we ought to start right away."

"We will, we will!" cried the girls; and Oaksie added, "Let us keep it a secret till they are all done. We can work at them in our play hour, down here under the trees. How surprised the teacher-lady will be!"

The very next day saw a great display of bits of silk and satin, beads of all colors, embroidery silks, and all the precious stores that little girls in Korea, as well as in America, gather and save as treasures. There was much excitement when Moksie, after a visit to her home, returned with a large piece of most wonderful golden-yellow silk.

"My mother," she explained, "was once maid to a court lady, and she gave her one of her old dresses. It was far too fine for my mother to wear, she said; she made my

oldest brother a cloak of it, to wear when he was little, and here is a piece that was left, and she said I could have it. It is so big that I am going to divide it, and give every one of you a piece."

The teacher-lady wondered greatly at the number of sudden requests to be allowed to make week-end visits home by the girls who lived near the school, and the mothers were much surprised at the energy with which the girls who came home insisted on turning out every nook and corner in the house, looking for scraps that might be usable. Some of them found treasures in the way of old beadwork, which could be ripped out, leaving the beads ready for new uses. Poona discovered some paints and brushes, just right for making marvelous pictures on Moksie's bits of yellow satin.

The little grove where the girls spent their play hour was down by the brook at the foot of the grounds. The teacher could see them busily at work there, but could not tell what they were doing; and the girls wore such an air of happy mystery that she was wise enough not to spoil it by asking questions.

So the summer weeks went on, and some really beautiful bits of work were completed by the busy little brown fingers. While the girls worked they talked happily about the girls in America, and tried to imagine what they would say when they saw their Christmas presents from Korea.

One day in the fall a procession of little girls, all carrying paper parcels carefully in their hands, marched up at the play hour to the teacher-lady's room.

"Will you please open them, dear teacher-lady?" said Poona, who led the way. "They are gifts for Jesus' Birthday to be sent to those kind girls in America who have sent presents to us so often."

The teacher opened the parcels with care and spread their contents on her bed, on her table, on her trunk—on everything in the room that would hold them.

There were needle-books, pin cushions, watch cases, thimble holders, and all sorts of dainty articles, every one so odd and oriental in style that no one could doubt that they came from the Far East. Besides, every girl had made a tiny doll out of carefully folded cloth or carved wood. The faces were painted on them with the contents of Poona's paint box, and each girl had cut from her own head the smooth, black hair that adorned the head of her doll. Every doll had several dresses, many of them beaded and embroidered heavily. Moksie's was dressed all in yellow silk, made according to her mother's description, just like the dress the court lady had given her.

"Why, girls, these are beautiful—just beautiful!" exclaimed the teacher over and over as she examined the neat work. "They are as pretty and well-made as anything I could buy in the largest shops in the bazaar. You could make a great deal of money if you wanted to make things like these to sell."

Poona shook her head. "These are too good to sell," she declared. "They were made for Jesus' Birthday gifts, and they are the very best we could make; and they are all full of love besides, and you can't sell that, can you, dear teacher-lady?"

"No," said the teacher softly, "that is something that cannot be bought or sold. The girls in America shall have these beautiful gifts, dear girls; every society that has sent you a box shall have at least one gift."

"And tell them," said Poona, "that we send goodwill back to them, so that there need never, never be a Jesus' Birthday in America without it, no matter how much they send across the sea."

WHEN UME SAN CUT HER HAIR

"I wonder," said Miss Dodge, the organist, watching the little chapel of the Japanese mission fill with its accustomed audience of small brown men and women, "what has become of Mr. Oyama?"

"Hiro Oyama?" asked the preacher, who had been laboring for five years among the Japanese of this California city, and knew most of them by name. "He has not been here for some weeks, I have noticed."

"And he was always so faithful," added Miss Dodge. "Oh, here he comes!" she suddenly exclaimed. "After the service I am going to tell him we missed him. He always makes himself so useful."

Mr. Oyama, a bright-looking young Japanese, was already making himself useful by handing out books and finding seats for late comers. The grace and politeness of the self-appointed usher brought more than one shy visitor to a front seat, who would otherwise have slipped out into the night again on finding the rear benches occupied.

"Hiro is a jewel," said the minister, watching him. "Well, Miss Dodge, it is almost time. Have you selected an opening hymn?"

After the service was over, Hiro Oyama came of his own accord to the platform to meet the questions of the minister and Miss Dodge. A curious bashfulness hung about him as he advanced.

"Well, Hiro, where have you been?" asked the pastor, with a friendly grasp of the hand. "We have missed you very much. Not sick, I hope?"

"No, honorable sir, thank you very much," said Hiro, bowing profoundly. "I am much grieved that I have not

come to the meetings of late; but I have been like the man in the parable—I have married a wife."

"Married, Hiro? I didn't know you had any young lady in view as a wife," said the pastor, surprised. Japanese betrothals and weddings are usually elaborate affairs, conducted with much ceremony. Hiro's sallow cheeks reddened.

"I have not arranged any marriage here," he said, with painful embarrassment. "I—I sent for my wife to Japan."

"Sent for her?" exclaimed Miss Dodge. "Not one of the picture-brides?"

Hiro bowed silently, and drew from his pocket a portrait of a pretty little Japanese maiden. Many young Japanese in our Western States get brides in this way from Japan, never having seen anything of the girl but her picture, sent by agents from the Flowery Isles, who arrange the terms of the marriage and send the brides over. The Mission workers do not encourage this way of selecting brides, and Hiro felt that he was under the shadow of their disapproval.

"But, Hiro," said the minister, recovering his voice, "that need not have kept you from Church. I should think you would want all the more to come, and bring your wife with you."

"My wife," said Hiro, hesitating, "she will not come to your honorable Church with me. She—she has been brought up a Buddhist, sir."

"A Buddhist, Hiro, and you are a Christian? How were you married, then?"

"Buddhist ceremony over in Japan," explained Hiro. "Very honorable ancient ceremony, sir."

"No Christian marriage, Hiro?"

"She is very strong Buddhist, honorable sir," said Hiro patiently. "By-and-by I try to show her it is good to be Christian. Now she will not hear one word about Christ.

She very angry about my going to Christian Church; but I say I must come tonight; you are my friends, you will think I am deserting you. Soon she see it is best to come with me."

Pastor and organist shook their heads doubtingly. They had seen such cases before, and it was usually the heathen religion, with all its old memories of the home land, that conquered in the end.

"Ah, Hiro, why couldn't you have chosen some nice Christian girl here in America?" sighed the pastor. "But never mind; she is your wife now, and you must be very kind to her, and try to show her that Christians make good husbands. If she is to be won to Christ it must be the goodness of your life that does it, for that is all she will see of Christians if she does not come to Church."

Hiro flushed again. He could not recall having been particularly kind to the lonely little bride, homesick in a strange land, whose appeals had kept him for three whole weeks from his beloved chapel. He had spoken harshly to her this evening, telling her that wives did not rule their husbands, even in America, and she could do as she pleased—he was going to church.

"Ume San," he said rather stiffly, "will learn that my religion is to be hers."

"She looks like a very sweet little girl, Hiro," said the pastor, inspecting the picture which the young man still held in his hand. "Don't try to drive her, but be gentle with her, and we will all pray that she may come with you willingly some day."

Hiro bowed, with a somewhat less stern expression on his face, and turned toward the little home where he had left Ume San in tears before her little bronze image of Buddha, brought from Japan.

The narrow little stairs were very dark, and he stumbled several times in going up. The room at the top was

dark also, and a fear gripped Hiro's heart that Ume San had run away from him. His hand trembled as he struck a light.

She was not in the first room. With lighted match he pushed on into the little sleeping room. There on the bed, asleep, with the tear stains on her face, lay Ume San; but why did she look so strange, and what was that black heap beside her? The match suddenly went out. Hiro was so much excited that he could hardly see to light the little gas jet above the table. When he turned to look again, Ume San was sitting up; and that which lay beside her on the bed, black and glossy as jet, was her long, dark hair! She had cut it all off close to her head, as Japanese women do in sign of very great sorrow.

"Ume San!" gasped Hiro. "What have you done?"

The little girl—she was not over sixteen—looked down at the lengths of beautiful hair, and put one hand to her unevenly cropped head. Then her trouble all came back to her, and she began to sob quietly.

"Tell me, child, what have you done this for?" demanded Hiro.

"You would go to that terrible Christian place," sobbed Ume San, "and I could not make you stay with me. So I cut off my hair to make you sorry you went. You will stay with me now, will you not, honorable husband?" she begged in her most coaxing tones.

Hiro was a Christian, and by nature a gentleman; but he was very angry and turned coldly away from his girl bride.

"You are not likely to make me want to stay with you by making yourself look like one of your Buddhist priests with a shaved head," he said, and left the room.

"Then I will cut off my head next time!" shrieked Ume San frantically after him, and threw herself on the bed again. Her great sacrifice had all been in vain! Her hair

was gone, and instead of making Hiro feel how much she would give up to keep him from the dangers of the false religion, as it seemed to her, she had only driven him away in anger. He stayed a long while in the outer room, and came back only when long silence made him believe that Ume San was asleep again.

Several days passed very unhappily for both Hiro and Ume San. They spoke as little as possible; Hiro went to his work and came back, ate and slept, with no glances at the poor little shorn head or the little brown hands that trembled as they set his tea before him.

One day the loneliness became too much for Ume San. She was afraid to go out alone in the big city, but anything was better than sitting there in her unhappiness. She dressed in her best, threw a scarf over her cropped head, and started out like a timid little mouse creeping from its hole.

On and on she wandered, wondering much at the strange sights and sounds. Presently she was outside the Japanese quarter and among the big American stores. She almost forgot her troubles in wonder at the beautiful things she saw in the windows, and she walked on from one to another, completely losing her way, until she came to a street where traffic roared about her on every side, and she realized that she was lost.

The crowd pressed her onward. Then suddenly, on the busiest street crossing, it seemed as if all the throng of people had deserted her, and she was alone in the midst of rushing wheels. The rest of the crowd had stopped at the signal of a policeman; Ume San had not seen or understood it, and now she was in the middle of the street, a scared little figure, with trolley cars clanging their bells and automobiles frantically blowing their horns at her, only confusing her more.

Suddenly a firm hand caught her elbow and dragged her back to the pavement. The face she looked up into was that of an American lady, but the words that came from the kind lips of her rescuer were Japanese.

"Poor little girl! You were almost run over. You have not been downtown alone before, have you? Tell me where you live and I will take you home."

Ume San was almost too frightened to answer. Somehow she had managed to remember the name of the street—it was a Japanese name that sounded like home to her when Hiro had told it to her—and she stammeringly told the lady what it was.

"Away back there! Never mind, child, I'll see you safe home again; but never try to come down here alone, or you may be hurt. What were you doing here anyway?"

Ume San's fright and the kindness of the stranger's voice drew tears to her eyes. Before she knew it, there on the crowded street as they walked along, she was pouring out to the kind American lady all the story of her homesickness, her loneliness and her grief because her husband was angry with her. A few kindly questions drew from her the whole story of how her husband was entrapped by those dreadful Christians, who taught him to be disrespectful to the divine Buddha, and would certainly make him leave her altogether if he did not stop going to worship with them. The lady smiled a little at this, but made no comment. When Ume San told her about the loss of her hair she only said, "Poor, foolish child! But you know you can have it made up into a wig, so that you can wear it until your hair grows again."

Ume San caught gladly at the suggestion. The lady promised to show her a place where it could be done. Perhaps if she showed Hiro that she was sorry he would be kinder to her.

It was growing dusk when they reached the street with the Japanese name. Suddenly there came a rush of eager footsteps, and hands that caught Ume San in a strong clasp, and a voice full of excitement, not like Hiro's calmly polite tones, saying, "Ume San! Ume San, where have you been? Oh, Miss Dodge, where did you find her?"

"Down on Main Avenue, getting run over, or very nearly so!" replied the lady.

"Ume San," continued Hiro, still holding tight to her hand, "this is the Christian lady from the Mission, who plays the songs we sing. Oh, I am so glad she found you! Won't you forgive me, Ume San?"

Ume San could not speak for amazement. This kind, good lady one of those dreadful Christians? She could hardly believe her ears.

There in the dusk on her own doorstep she cast a look of sweetest understanding on the pleading Hiro; then turning to Miss Dodge, she said, "And you will take me soon, honorable lady, to the hair-dresser? For I want to wear my hair again, so I can go with my husband to his Christian worship-house next Sunday."

THE BOOK SAN ANTONIO HID

In a little farmhouse lying in a valley of the mountain region of New Mexico, a bright open fire was glowing one frosty autumn night. On the hearth before it lay two prostrate figures, a man, and a boy about nine years old. Before them on the floor was lying a well-worn picture card. It was not the picture they were studying so intently—a poor copy of one of Raphael's Madonnas—but the words printed in Spanish on the back.

"I see it, father!" cried the boy eagerly. "I can spell it out now—J-e-s-u. It is the name of the blessed Jesus, is it not, father?"

"Yes, Pedro," said Juan Carreno, crossing himself devoutly. "That is the name of our Lord. Ah, how many nights, lying here before the fire, I puzzled my poor brains and strained my eyes trying to spell out the blessed name!"

The dog, lying outside the door, began to bark.

"Someone is coming!" said Pedro. "Carlo never barks like that unless he hears someone."

A knock at the door brought them both to their feet and stirred the rest of the group around the fire. Juan's wife, Rosita, laid down her sewing; his sisters, Pepita and Juana, looked up from the beautiful piece of drawn-work they were making for sale by the light of a flickering candle; even the old grandparents woke from their dozing and their eyes brightened with interest. Visitors were scarce in the little valley.

A young man, lithe and vigorous, with a traveler's pack strapped upon his shoulders, stood in the doorway.

"Why, it is Manuel—our cousin, Manuel!" exclaimed Juan after a moment of indecision. "Come in! Come in!

How well you look, cousin, and how tall you have grown! It is a long time since we saw you—but, then, you have been far away."

"Yes, away up in Colorado," said Manuel, greeting one after another of his relatives. "Will you take me in for a little visit? I had not time to let you know I was coming, for it is an unexpected trip. I came down with a man who is buying cattle, to act as interpreter. He was taken ill and has to stay for some weeks in the hospital at Santa Fé, and in the meantime I can come home here and wait for him."

"We are glad to have you," said Juan, and all the family circle echoed the words, for they all loved the orphan cousin. The old grandmother stroked his hand fondly, saying, "It is a lucky day that brings you back to us, my child."

"And what have you been doing with yourself, Manuel?" questioned his cousin Juana.

"Oh, I have been working at different things and seeing many places. I have seen the Grand Canyon and lived in the city of Denver; I have earned some money, and gained some knowledge, too, I hope. I met a kind man who preaches in a Mission, and he has taught me to read."

"To read!" cried little Pedro in excitement. "That is what Father and I were trying to do when you knocked at the door. See, this is what we read!" And he picked up the card lying on the hearth and presented it to his cousin.

"What is this?" inquired Manuel, scanning it by the firelight. "Oh, yes, a card with the Apostles' Creed on it in Spanish. I did not know you could read, cousin," he said to Juan. His cousin's face flushed. "That is all I can read, Manuel," he admitted, "but I am trying to teach Pedro what little I know."

"How comes it that you can read only this?" asked Manuel curiously.

"It is too long a story to tell you all," said Juan, "but I will explain as well as I can. You see, when I was a little fellow I wanted very badly to learn to read. Young José Gamboa, the son of our rich neighbor, went away to Santa Fé to school, and I used to lie awake at nights and pray to the saints—to San Antonio, whose image was in the niche above my bed—that I might have a chance to go too. Then my father, as you know, fell and hurt himself, and has been lame ever since; so I knew I was needed at home and gave up all thoughts of going away."

"And a good son he has been," put in the old father from his chair by the fire.

"Still," went on Juan, "I thought I might learn a little at home. I knew the priest could read, for he reads mass every Sunday out of a book; so one day, when I was about fifteen years old, I went and asked him to teach me. I offered him a season's wool from one of my best sheep for it; but he was very angry, and set me a heavy penance for what he called my 'sin of presumption.' It was then I learned that the priests do not want the people to learn to read; they say it is dangerous and makes them unbelievers; but I do not see why.

"So the years went on, and by the time I was twenty I had a wife and little Pedro here. When he was christened—and a whole cow we paid the priest to do it, to be sure!—the priest gave him this little card. He told me the words on this side were the *credo*.

"Then I was very glad, for I knew the *credo* by heart and I thought, 'Now I can learn to read, for I can say the words I know and see what they look like on the card.'

"It was very hard at first, for I could only tell by the spaces between them where one word ended and another began. Pedro was five years old before I had puzzled them all out; and even then I knew only those words which were on the card. It is too bad there are so few words in

the *credo*. Now I am trying to teach them to Pedro, and he learns quicker than I did; but, then, I had nobody to help me. How I wish I could learn to read all the words there are!"

"Cousin Juan," said Manuel quickly, "you can learn now, and Pedro, too. See," he continued, pulling out a little Book from his pocket, "here is the whole Bible in Spanish. I will teach you gladly, for I can read it all."

Pedro clapped his hands, and Juan's dark eyes glowed in the firelight.

"We will begin tomorrow," he said.

The weeks which Manuel spent in the little valley were wonderful ones to all the people in that scattered community. None of them had ever traveled farther than Santa Fé, and the stories Manuel good-naturedly related of the big world he had seen were like fairy tales to these simple people. By day the neighbors left their work and came in to visit and ask questions; but in the evening there were still more wonderful times around the fire, when Manuel taught Juan and quick-witted little Pedro the rest of the alphabet, and pored with them over the little Bible.

He told them many things, too, which he had learned from the Protestant missionary in Colorado, about the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the truth as it is shown in God's Word.

Juan listened without objection to his criticism of the priests; but when Manuel went on to say that the saints were not to be prayed to, his cousin grew angry.

"Not pray to the good San Antonio, who has stood above my bed all these years and protected me from harm? Not to pray to San Juan, for whom I was named? to San Pedro, the patron saint of my boy? to the Virgin Mother herself? Fie, Manuel; this is heresy you have learned!" and he would hear no more of it.

But Pepita and Juana were greatly interested, and inclined to side with Manuel. Rosita listened eagerly, too, though she would not anger her husband by contradicting him. Even the old grandparents nodded their heads wisely over Manuel's words, and begged him to read again and again from the little Bible. Pedro drank it in like a draught of honey, and could soon read aloud to the old folks almost as well as Manuel.

One evening their peace was rudely disturbed. A loud knocking at the door made them open, to admit the priest in a great fury. "What is going on here?" he cried as soon as he had crossed the doorstep. "You are teaching these people to read, against my commands, out of a forbidden book, and talking treason against the saints and the Church."

"It is no treason," said Manuel steadily. "It is only what God Himself says in His book."

"The book lies!" shouted the priest furiously. "You shall leave the valley at once, before your heresy has tainted the rest of my flock. Already some of the neighbors tell me you have talked to them of these things. Take your book and go! And as for these people"—turning to the family—"unless they give up these evil thoughts, I will warn all the neighbors to shun them. No one in the whole valley will speak to them or enter their dwelling. They shall be cast out of the Church. Do you hear?" he said fiercely to Juan. Manuel answered for them all.

"Yes, we hear you, man of wrath," he said boldly, "and I will tell you what you have done for me. Up to now, though I believed what I read in God's book, I could not bring myself to break away from the Church of my fathers; but now I declare that I am no Roman Catholic, and never will be one any more. The teachings of your Church are false, you priests are tyrants, and the people are kept in ignorance by you, because you are afraid to

have them learn the truth. I am going back to join that little Protestant Mission, where I learned to read God's book and to know what is true."

After the priest had departed in a rage Manuel turned to Juan. "Dear cousin," he said, "tomorrow was my day to leave you, at any rate, and perhaps it is well. I am going, but I give you my little Bible; I can easily get another. Read it, and pray to Christ, not to the saints. I am going back again across the mountains to ask the missionary to teach me more, and some day I am coming back to teach the poor people who are kept from the truth by such men as this priest of yours."

After Manuel was gone Juan and Rosita did everything they could to pacify the priest. They went to mass, they did the heavy penances he set them, but all to no purpose. The priest refused to be satisfied unless they gave up the Bible, which he suspected Manuel had left behind.

One day, coming home from church, Juan took from little Pedro's hands the Bible, from which he had been reading to his grandparents.

"Little book," said Juan, handling it reverently, "you have taught me many things. Whether all is in you that Manuel says, I am not certain; but this I know, that the man who calls himself God's priest is no friend to me or you. I will hide you away, for I think he is coming to look for you.

"Where can I put you? This is only a small house, and he will search every part of it. He will soon be here, and I have no time to dig in the earth and bury you.

"San Antonio stands ever in the niche in the wall above my bed, as he has stood these many years. Perhaps it is true that he is not good to pray to for all things; he did not grant my prayer to go away to school. But often when I have lost something I have prayed to San Antonio to help me find it, and he has almost always done so.

"People who are good at finding should be good at hiding, too. It happens that San Antonio has a hollow base beneath his image—large enough to hold a little book. There, San Antonio; will you kindly hide my Bible for me?"

Tilting the plaster image, Juan laid the book in the hollow pedestal and replaced San Antonio just as Pedro ran in to tell his father that the priest was coming up the hill.

Not that day only, but many another day San Antonio faithfully guarded the Bible. Friends turned against Juan and his family, and persecutions began. Time after time the old farmhouse was searched for the book, and Juan was threatened with all sorts of punishment if he did not give it up. But nobody ever thought of looking for the "Protestant book" under the statue of a Roman Catholic saint. Juan and San Antonio kept the secret well, and at night, with one of the family to watch always by the door, the book came out of hiding and many comfortable words were read to console them in all their troubles.

* * * * *

Two whole years had passed away; they were stormy years for Juan and his family. The old father had died, heartbroken at the enmity of his neighbors, but trusting in the Christ who had said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you." The grandmother was childish now, but could still repeat a verse or two which she had committed to memory. Pepita and Juana now read the Bible for themselves, and believed it with all their hearts.

Rosita's relatives had disowned her when they learned of Juan's heresy. They had even threatened to kill him, and at one time the whole family had fled and lived for weeks in a one-room hut high on the mountainside. The storm had blown over and they had come back with the

little book—which had gone along up the mountain—to find San Antonio still standing, waiting to hide it again.

One day a horseman came riding up the valley, and Pedro, who first caught sight of him, ran in shouting, "Manuel! Manuel!"

What a happy meeting it was! How they talked over the fire that night, and how they rejoiced when Manuel told them that he was now a preacher of the truth and that he had come to prepare the way for a new Mission which a great American missionary was going to establish nearby. That great man was Sheldon Jackson, one of the most devoted and powerful preachers of God's Word our country has ever known.

Under the shadow of such an influence great changes came to the little valley. Many people, disgusted by the cruelty and injustice of the priest toward Juan and his family, began to inquire about the book of God and the truth it taught. The new faith grew stronger and stronger, and no one was persecuted any more for reading God's Word.

One day Juan stood thoughtfully before the statue of San Antonio, his Bible in his hand.

"It is hardly proper," he said at last, "for the image of a saint to stand guard above the bed of a Protestant. But you have been very good to me, San Antonio. I do not pray to you any more, for I know that Christ alone answers our prayers. But for the sake of the secret you kept and the little book you hid through all those evil days, San Antonio, you shall stand here as long as I live, and watch me read my little Bible."

THE SCHOOL THAT WAS ADOPTED

It was evening, and the missionary pastor was sitting on the veranda of his bungalow, enjoying with his wife the coolness of the dusk after the long, hot day.

"Someone is coming up the walk," whispered Mrs. Clark. "Oh, I did hope you could rest this evening!"

"Why, Rambhau!" said Doctor Clark, rising to greet the visitor. "I am glad to see you. Did you walk all the eight miles in from Khandala?"

"Yes, sir," said Rambhau respectfully. "I wanted to have a little talk with you, if you have time."

"Certainly I have. Sit down here on the veranda with us."

Rambhau seated himself. He was a sturdy, heavy-set man of middle age, neatly but plainly dressed in native costume. His homely face, swarthy from many summers beneath the hot sun of India, was gentle and thoughtful in expression, his eyes large and dreamy. He looked just what he was—a fair type of an Indian Christian of one of the lower castes, from a quiet little village, where people took life easily, and did not worry about trying to accomplish great things.

"And you are well, Rambhau, and the wife?" inquired Doctor Clark. "You are in town for the night?"

"Oh, no, I am going home tonight again," said Rambhau. "The moonlight will make the walking pleasant; besides, my wife will be eager to have me return."

"Why, what have you been doing in town? Buying her calico for a new dress?" asked the missionary, smiling.

"I came in to see you, sir," said Rambhau. "You see, since we have been Christians my wife and I have been very much happier than we ever were before. We have

always lived a quiet, peaceful life; but we have had one great sorrow. No children have ever come to share our home.

"We used to think that was because the gods were angry with us. But now we know it is not so, and we are not grieved about it as we were. Yet we are very lonely. And we have been talking together, and wondering if we could not find a child to adopt, so that there might be one to till the ground and live in the house after us."

"Why, Rambhau, that is an excellent idea!" said Doctor Clark. "Did you want me to help you find a child to adopt? There are plenty of them here in the orphanage."

"That is what I want to ask." replied Rambhau. "If it is right that we do so, we will take an orphan from here. But my father, and his before him, and back farther than we can count, were men of Khandala—born there, living always in the village, loving every foot of grounud there. Would a child of strangers love Khandala so? Might he not some day go away and leave the old home to those who would not care for it?

"First we said 'Let us look for an orphan in Khandala.' But we know no child there who has not someone to care for him, either parents or grandparents. Then we said, 'Let us go into the school and watch the children there; we can see what a true son of Khandala would be like, and if we must go outside our village to choose, we will choose a child as nearly like the children of our village as may be.'

"We both went to visit the school once or twice; but my wife is not strong, and the walk to the school is hot. So she stayed at home; but I made a little visit to the school almost every day.

"There were not many children in the school, as you know, sir. Since there were so few, I soon came to know each one. They were all different, but all such good, dear

children! Even if they were stupid, I loved them; and they loved me, for I took them fruit from my trees, and little cakes my wife made. Soon I came home and said, 'Manorama, I could never choose between those children, if I could have any one I wanted; I would have to adopt them all!'

"Then Manorama said, 'Rambhau, while we wait for a child to adopt, why do we not adopt the school?' And I said, 'What do you mean?' She said, 'We have more than we need for ourselves; we could spend some money, and we could give some time to the care of a child if we had one. Can we not give that time and money to help all the children in the school, since you love them all?'

" 'Manorama,' I said, 'you are a wise woman, and I will begin today. The teacher said there were some children who were older, and work in the day. They had asked him to have a school for them at night. But he is a little lazy, you know; and he told them the mission people did not allow much money for running the school, and he could not buy oil for the lamp, to teach them at night. To-night I am going down to fill the lamp with oil, and tell him he can teach those boys and girls!' "

Dr. Clark smiled in the darkness. He could see plainly in his mind the face of the fat, easy-going native teacher who was the best the mission could afford for the little school in Khandala.

"I do not think the teacher was too well pleased at first," went on Rambhau, "but he opened the night school. After a few days I said to Manorama, 'Children grow, if they are healthy. The school is our child; we must help it to grow. There are children in the village whose parents are careless and do not send them. Some of them are poor, and the children have no clothing to wear to school. We must see about these things.'

"So I went from house to house, all through the village, to see why the children were not at school. Manorama gathered the needy ones and gave them cloth, and showed the girls how to make garments. Soon our child, the school, was twice as large, and we were twice as happy.

"The teacher sometimes was careless and made excuses. He said he had not the things he needed for teaching, and so he could not do this, or he could not do that. I said to him, 'Very well, you shall have what you need.' I got him to make me a list, and here are the things he said were needed. I do not think he expected I would get them; but the school is my child, and I do not want it badly taught."

Rambhau unfolded a lengthy list of school supplies, and presented it to Doctor Clark.

"So I have brought it to you," he continued, "to order all these things for me. The school must have what it needs."

"Why, Rambhau!" exclaimed Doctor Clark, "This is splendid! You are making the school over new!"

Rambhau's plain face glowed with pleasure.

"You will come out to see us soon?" he said. "There is a school festival next Friday; there will be prizes given. Will you come and present them?"

The following Friday Doctor and Mrs. Clark were early at the little schoolhouse in Khandala; but, early as they were, the ground and building were already filled with a throng of eager parents and excited children.

"Here comes Rambhau! Oh, look at him!" whispered the missionary's wife. "There is a perfect swarm of children about him. How they love him; and how delighted he is!"

"I can guess who is giving the prizes," returned her husband. "This school never had a prize before, except picture cards that came in mission boxes from America.

The teacher tells me the prizes today are books, drawing sets and school bags, all of the best. The children, he says, are working harder at their lessons than they ever did, and really deserve these nice things.

"I can see a difference in the teacher too. Somehow he looks wakened up. I expect it is hard to be lazy where Rambhau is."

"Hush! The exercises are going to begin."

After the children had gone through their exercises with flying colors and had received their prizes—Rambhau had seen to it that not a child there had failed to receive something, if only a pencil—Doctor Clark met him in the midst of the crowd, with two or three children clinging to each hand, to the discomfort of his fingers, which were almost pulled apart, but to the great joy of his soul, judging by his rapturous expression. Manorama was somewhere in the background with a basket of cakes, and every child was sticky and happy.

"Am I not a happy father?" asked Rambhau, laughing. "And now I want to tell you something more.

"Last night I said to Manorama, 'It is not good to show partiality. When one child is petted and another neglected, there is sorrow and jealousy. Now the church here in Khandala is the big sister of the school. The sister is neglected, while the little brother is tenderly cared for. That is the old way of treating children in India—the heathen way; but it is not the Christian way.' "

"You don't mean to say that you are going to adopt the church, too!" said Doctor Clark in amazement.

"Why not?" asked Rambhau placidly. "It needs many things—a new roof, a bell, Bibles and music books. Some day, if we get our church repaired and our people gathered in, perhaps the missionaries will give us a pastor to live among us, and not just a preacher to visit us once a month."

"I am quite sure of it, Rambhau," said Doctor Clark. "In fact, as missionary superintendent of this district, I can promise you one, if you can build up the church as you have the school. There is a fine young man in our training school who will soon be ready for you.

"These adopted children of yours are a very interesting family, my friend. But what becomes of the child of Khandala, who was to live in your house and till your ground after you?"

"Who can tell?" said Rambhau, and his large dark eyes were dreamier than ever. "Perhaps some day the school will grow so large that they will need a home for more teachers. Perhaps they will want a schoolhouse for the very little ones—ah, yes, a kindergarten. The grounds would do well for a playground, maybe. All we have, sooner or later, will belong to our children.

"But here comes Manorama with the cakes. Will you try one?"

FIGHTERS OF FIRE

"The Red Flower! The Red Flower!" screamed Yuan, running out into the street. It did not sound like anything to scream about, but it was really the Chinese way of crying, "Fire! Fire!"

Behind him a tongue of flame leaped from the open door. Another appeared at the window, and soon the roof of the little house was being devoured by many more. Before Yuan was around the corner, the big frame warehouse next door was beginning to blaze.

Yuan had never been so frightened in all the seven years of his life. He had been so busy making himself a new kite that he had not noticed a piece of string which had fallen into the brazier, with one end among the live coals and the other in a nest of his papers. Before he knew it the whole pile was ablaze. There was no water in the little house, and he had tried to beat out the flames with his hands, almost setting his clothing on fire. In doing so he knocked over the whole brazier, and the coals flew all over the floor. He had so many papers scattered about that soon he found himself in a ring of fire. He made a dash for the door and was now running down the street, making as much noise as possible.

There was no alarm-box on the corner in that Chinese city of Kiating; neither was there a great shiny engine to come leaping down the street at the thundering heels of powerful horses. Nobody in Kiating—very few people in all China, in fact—had any idea that there were such ways of fighting the Red Flower. There was no hose, no plug to fasten it to if there had been one—nothing but hands and buckets to fight that great and terrible enemy.

Yuan went on, running and screaming, and people began to come out of their houses and hasten toward the blazing buildings. Yuan's home was in an ill-built, crowded street, whose frail wooden buildings caught and burned like dead grass on a prairie. The whole street was soon in flames, and the fire was creeping rapidly into the next block.

People were running frantically from the houses, trying to save what bits of property they could. Women were dragging their children from under roofs already burning; the children were crying with terror, dogs were howling, chickens were squawking with fright in their pens. Everybody was trying to do everything but to put out the fire.

Yuan's mother, hurrying home from market, found no house to take her purchases into. She sat down in the street, under the rain of blazing cinders, and wailed aloud, joining her voice to those of other homeless women and children. If tears could have put out the flames there would have been water in plenty.

A few people whose houses were in advance of the flames took buckets, drew water from their wells, and mounted to the roofs of their homes to drench them with water and try to prevent the fire from kindling on them. But the air was like a great furnace; the flames swept nearer and nearer, and the roofs were soon abandoned.

Meantime Yuan ran blindly on, screaming as he went. The fire was far behind him now; he was in a part of the city which was in no danger, for the wind was from it toward the quarter where the fire had started.

"What's all this?" suddenly cried a man's voice, and a strong hand arrested Yuan in his flight. "Here, youngster, what are you yelling about?"

The words were Chinese, but the accent was strange to Yuan. He opened his eyes wide and found himself in the hands of one of the dreaded "foreign devils," as he was accustomed to hear all foreigners called. He screamed

harder than ever and tried to twist away from the firm hand, but found it useless.

"Doctor Hobart, what's wrong with this boy?" asked his captor. "He keeps screaming about a red flower. What does he mean?"

The elder missionary paused to listen.

"He means fire," he explained to his young assistant. "That's what they call it; and look! It must be a big one!" He pointed to the sky, where a mighty column of smoke was beginning to ascend.

"In this dry weather their little wooden houses will burn like tinder," he declared. "The destruction will be terrible. Come, Shipley, let's hurry back to the school and get the fellows out to help."

As they hastened along Doctor Hobart explained further.

"You see, they haven't the least idea what to do; I doubt if we shall find even a bucket brigade at work. The water, as you know, is all in wells or cisterns, and it must be very low after the long drought we have had. They say some parts of this city have been rebuilt dozens of times—burned out over and over again. The people get into the habit of not building substantial houses, expecting them to be destroyed anyway, and that makes the danger of fire still greater."

Arriving at the mission school for young men, the two missionaries hastily passed the word around. Teachers and pupils poured out of the building; there would have been some pausing to argue about the whereabouts of the fire, but Doctor Hobart declared it would be better to start toward it and inquire on the way.

"Doctor," said one of the instructors, a young Chinese in spectacles, "there is no danger to these buildings from the fire, is there?"

"None at all, Cheng Mai; the wind is in the other direction," said Doctor Hobart.

"Then, why—pardon me—why should we leave our studies and intrude ourselves on this business which is none of ours?" questioned the young man. The missionary frowned slightly.

"You see, Cheng Mai," he explained patiently, "we must excuse you for not understanding, because you are not a Christian. Our religion teaches us that every man's need is our business, if we are able to help him. You needn't go if you are afraid," he added, looking at the slight form of the teacher. Cheng Mai's sallow cheeks flushed.

"I will go along," he said quietly.

At the gate of the mission compound Yuan stood, crying more softly now. Mr. Shipley seized him again.

"Here is our guide," he said. "Come, young man, lead us back to where you came from and show us this Red Flower of yours." Yuan shuddered, but obeyed. He hardly knew which he was more afraid of, the fire at home or the big voice and strong hand of the "foreign devil." Yet the white man's face, when he ventured to look up at it, seemed rather pleasant.

So it happened that the fire-swept district presently found in its streets a band of willing young men, urging everybody who still had a bucket to bring it along, and help save somebody's house, even if his own was gone.

The bucket brigade, however, was quickly out of work. The water in the wells was too low to afford any real aid; the flames had too great a headway. Five blocks were already gone and the fire seemed determined to sweep the dozen or more blocks that still lay between it and the open fields. The river was too far away to be of any use.

"If we only had a hose and a good hand-pump!" groaned Mr. Shipley.

"There is only one thing to do," said Doctor Hobart at last. "We must tear down some of the houses and make a gap too wide for the fire to cross."

"They won't let you," declared Mr. Shipley.

"See if they won't," said his friend, walking down the street toward the unburned blocks, whose owners were standing paralyzed, waiting for destruction to reach them. It took some argument, but finally they consented, and Doctor Hobart's band of students quickly pulled down enough of the fragile houses to stop the progress of the flames.

"Now," said the good doctor, "we will go back and see what we can collect in the way of relief supplies for these homeless people." Then to the men and women who had gathered around to thank him he said, with a hand on the head of Yuan, "Take good care of this young man; it was he who gave the alarm and brought us to help you." And Yuan was so proud that he almost forgot he had started the fire himself.

Five months later—events move slowly in China, and government officials more slowly still—the city council came in dignified procession to visit the mission school. They bore important-looking, long, white scrolls and presented one to each of the missionary teachers. On each scroll was written a long and profuse inscription of thanks and praise to the fighters of fire. Part of it read thus:

"Although these foreigners owned no goods or houses in the danger zone, nor were in the least concerned, yet they ran to the public service. They earnestly looked upon the dangers of another people as if it were the urgent pain of their own skins."

Others besides Cheng Mai had evidently been surprised at the self-forgetfulness of the foreigners. Doctor Hobart, in his speech of thanks, proposed to the council the pur-

chase of some hand-pumps and hose to prevent future desolations, and when the dignitaries left, all smiling and bowing, things looked very promising for the organization of a volunteer fire department under the leadership of the missionaries.

"I will never call the foreigners devils any more," said many a citizen of Kiating whenever the fire was recalled to mind. "They ran to save my house as if it were their own. They are really and truly the people of heaven."

MOTI'S MISTAKE

Moti was a very busy boy. All day he had been hurrying about the streets, hastening up wherever he saw that a little crowd had gathered. Under the feet of the passers-by he dodged wherever there was a chance of selling the sweetmeats from his little tray—the sweetmeats grandmother had made for him to sell during this great Hindu *mela,* or festival of Brindaban.

It was a good time for trade. Thousands of pilgrims had come to the city from all parts of India to perform the ceremonies of their religion at the shrines of the gods. There were tourists also from other lands, mingling their white faces with the dusky crowds. Moti had made many sales; his tray was almost empty now, but he was still darting busily about to see whatever was to be seen.

"Here, boy!" called a man across the narrow street, and Moti plunged over, expecting a sale. Great was his surprise when the man put a hand on his shoulder and thrust him suddenly under an arched gateway into a large open court. Here, to his astonishment, a great crowd of boys was gathered and men in long robes and turbans were going about among them talking earnestly.

Moti rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was not dreaming; all the more because the boys were street waifs of every caste, and the men who were mingling with them were high caste Brahmans, for whom it was defilement even to speak to one of a lower caste. Some great occasion must it be that would bring these haughty upholders of caste down to speaking with boys like himself.

Presently one of the men came toward the group where Moti was standing and began to speak.

"You may earn some money if you will," he said, "and it will be very easy. The Christians have chosen the time of our *mela* to make a disturbance. They are going around in bands, preaching their doctrines and selling or giving away to the very poor their sacred books and tracts and explaining them.

"We have gathered you to help us put an end to this trouble, which is an insult to our gods and an offence against the holiness of the *mela*. Wherever you see one of these people addressing a crowd you are to run among the people, making such a noise that the speaker cannot be heard. Whenever you get a chance you are to tear up the books and leaflets they sell. You will be well paid, and will be doing a service to the gods besides. Are you ready?"

What small boy does not welcome an excuse for making a noise and tearing things up? The boys assented with whoops of joy. Moti, however, stood irresolute.

He did not like the way the Brahman talked to the boys. While he spoke to them he kept his face averted and uttered the words as if he were talking to himself. He hated and despised them as much as ever, and was only hiring them to carry out his plans, not meeting them with real friendliness.

Then Moti was not sure that he wanted to disturb the Christians. He knew that a Christian Bible-woman came sometimes to see his grandmother, and had been very kind to her when she was sick. The Christians, when they bought his sweetmeats, never tried to cheat him, and once a lady from the mission had interfered when a bigger boy had tried to rob his tray.

The Christians had the wrong religion, no doubt. But they were harmless, kind-hearted people, and Moti did not relish the plan of making trouble for them.

A Brahman saw him standing undetermined while the stream of boys went flowing past him out of the gate.

"Why do you hesitate?" he said harshly. "Are you one of the wretched sect yourself, perhaps?"

"Oh, no!" said Moti, frightened by the man's vicious tone. "But I was sent out to sell sweetmeats, and they are not quite all gone. If I go into the crowds as you told us I shall lose my sweetmeats and perhaps my tray while I am busy tearing up books."

"Leave your tray here," said the man. "It will be safe till you come back. The money you get for this service will be worth more than the sweetmeats you have sold all day. You seem like an intelligent boy, so I will give you a special task.

"Here is money." Moti noticed that the Brahman dropped it on the tray, so that their hands might not happen to touch. "I am going to trust you to take it and do as I say with it. Go boldly up to the seller of books and buy copies of them, then tear them up in front of the crowd, so that nobody can ever read them. For this special service you shall have more pay, for you will be able to spoil more books than the other boys."

Moti took the money, left his tray, and followed the other boys, who were already busy up and down the street. Moti kept on till he came to an open square, where a large crowd was gathered around a preacher and a book-seller.

Some of the boys who had reached the square ahead of Moti were charging through the crowd, yelling and shouting, jostling the people so as to make them drop the books and leaflets, or even snatching them from their hands and tearing them up. Moti did none of these things. With the serious air of a purchaser, he walked directly up to the man who was selling books. Handing out a piece of money, he received a small copy of one of the gospels and several tracts.

The other boys were laughing loudly and making all sorts of insulting speeches as they tore up the books they

seized. Moti did not feel like doing that. But he was paid to destroy the book, and he must do it.

Mounting on the steps of a temple, where he stood above the heads of the crowd, he began deliberately to tear the Gospel to pieces, scattering its pages over the heads of the crowd. The wind caught them and carried them far and wide, out to the edges of the crowd, where the people had not yet received any books.

Suddenly a shrill cry broke on Moti's ear. A little old woman came pushing through the crowd and up the temple steps toward him.

"Grandmother!" gasped Moti, hastily dropping the remnants of the book he held.

"Yes, grandmother!" cried the old woman, seizing him by the arm. "Here I go out in all this crowd into the bazaar to buy more sugar for the sweetmeats you are to sell tomorrow, and what do I find?

"Hearing the voice of a man speaking, I stop, and hear many good words. Then these evil boys come, making a tumult, and I can hear no more. But up here, in the eyes of all the world, I see my son's son tearing to pieces one of the sacred books, such as the good people are selling.

"O son of folly, what do you think to do? You may tear up their books, but all the time they are printing more. Can you destroy their printing presses too? Unless you do that it is vain to tear up paper."

Moti hung his head. Grandmother went on with increased vigor.

"And what are you doing after all? See!" and she pointed out over the heads of the crowd to where the people on the outskirts were eagerly picking up the pieces of paper which Moti had scattered, piecing them together and reading them. "See!" she repeated. "You have only spread the good words farther and caused more people to read them. They will be all the more eager now,

because they think that there must be something worth reading in them, or you would not take such trouble to keep them from doing it. Do you not see that you are helping these people to sell more?"

And it was true. Those who had read from the torn bits were already pressing forward, eager to buy a whole copy. The book-seller was thronged so that he could hardly handle his wares.

"They are good words," said grandmother solemnly; "words of comfort and help, words about the true God; I have heard them and I believe them. Go, now, and get your tray, O misguided child of mine! Come home with me and learn wisdom." Grandmother descended the steps, dragging her grandson with her. The crowd made way respectfully for the old lady; many of them had listened to her little sermon, which she had uttered with no thought of any hearer but Moti, but which had rung out so clearly over their heads that the people around had turned to hear.

All unconscious that she had been preaching to them, the old woman pushed through the midst, with a very downcast Moti following at her heels.

The Brahmans were not to be seen when Moti reached the courtyard. His tray stood where he had left it, with its few remaining sweetmeats; he picked it up, laid down the rest of the money the Brahman had given him, and started off, very much ashamed of himself.

Grandmother was waiting for him outside. She took pity on the boy when she saw his drooping head appear under the gateway.

"Come home, Moti, with grandmother," she said consolingly. "I have a book there myself, and it is my fault that I have not told you so before. Now you shall learn to read it and hear of a Holy Man who loved boys like you. He was not proud like the Brahmans; when the boys and girls came to Him, He laid His hands on them and

blessed them. You tried to injure Him today by harming His servants. But He did not let you do it; He used your hands to scatter His words farther, and make more people know them. Come with me, little grandson, and learn about Him."

And Moti went gladly.

"Yes," said Engeltina, wiping her hand dry to offer it to me, "yes, it is all true; I have taken the new disease, and it is all the fault of Sarah, the Bible-woman."

"The new disease, Engeltina?" said I. "Don't talk in riddles to a poor bewildered missionary, just back from a year's vacation in America. You can't expect me to know everything that has happened here in Ceylon while I have been away. What disease do you mean? I am sure you look healthy enough—and happy enough too."

"Happy? Yes!" said Engeltina. "I never knew what it was to be happy before. That is what comes of taking the disease. But I will tell you truly all about it. You used to know me when I came every week to do your washing. What kind of a woman would you have called me if you had happened to speak of me to your friends in America?"

The question was so blunt that I hardly knew how to answer it. Engeltina had been an excellent worker, but her sharp tongue was the terror of the neighborhood. She saw my hesitation and I was forced to answer.

"You were industrious and faithful always, Engeltina," I said. "My clothes came from your hands as white as snow. But I knew also that you had no manner of use for the things the missionaries taught, and that is why you and I did not know each other better."

My frankness pleased her, and she laid a hardened palm on my wrist as she replied, "That is true, but it is not nearly all. You knew that my neighbors dreaded me because I was always ready for a quarrel; that my husband was often afraid to come home after his day's work because I was always scolding and nagging him. He would

go instead to buy arrack and drink it, then when he came home tipsy I would scold still more, until he nodded off to sleep and forgot to listen. My own little daughter, whom I loved more than any living thing, used to have that scared look in her eyes, just like a dog that expects a kick. It makes me hate myself to think of it."

The sunshine found some bright drops suddenly standing on Engeltina's lashes. My own throat somehow felt husky and I could not say anything.

"I kept quiet enough before you," she continued, "because I was ashamed to have the white people know how mean I was. You never heard me talk about the Jesus doctrine, but all my neighbors knew what I thought of it.

" 'Ho,' I used to say, 'another poor, weak creature has taken the Christian disease! First one, then another, and all of them fools! Here are our gods, which our fathers have worshiped for generations; here are their temples, rich and beautiful, and their images that all of us can see. And here comes along a foreigner with a white face and a little book, and talks about a man who died before any of us were born, and whom nobody living has ever seen.

" 'Then somebody begins to cry, and say, "Oh, oh, I have been all wrong, and my fathers before me! See, I leave my faith and believe the Jesus doctrine!" Then the foreign teacher sprinkles a little water on him and he is called a Christian. Next his neighbor catches the disease, then it runs down a whole street, just like smallpox; at last a whole village comes, asking to have the water sprinkled on them.

" 'It is a fearful disease, but it will never take me. It makes people weak and foolish. Last week one of my neighbors, who used to quarrel with us all, said she had taken this Christian disease. I went up and shook my fists in her face, but she never moved. I called her all the bad names I knew, and she never opened her mouth to call me

one back. She just sat there like an idiot and let me abuse her. That is what the disease does to people. Bah, Engeltina will never take such a disease as that!' Yes, dear lady, that was how I used to talk."

Engeltina paused for breath. The tale had been quite startling while she was telling it, for she actually shook her fists at me, acting out the whole story; but I could see that she was quite unconscious of having done so. Even when she repeated her own abusive words her voice had a softer tone than formerly.

"But what changed your mind?" I ventured to ask.

"Oh, it was that Bible-woman, Sarah, and her little book!" said Engeltina. "When she first came and wanted to read out of it to me I drove her away with many angry words.

" 'You,' I said, 'you that I have known from childhood, who played with me as a little puny girl, so frail that I could pick you up and put you on my back—you come here now and try to teach me! I will show you that Engeltina is still stronger than you are. You cannot infect me with your poisonous talk. Go away with your Christian disease; all the town may take it out of your little book, but not Engeltina. Begone, I say!'

"She is just a frail little body yet, is Sarah, and I am big and strong. She went without a word; and then all of a sudden I felt ashamed to have threatened such a little mite of a thing. I was almost sorry, especially when I thought how she had actually smiled at me as she went out of the compound.

"I did not see her again for a week. Then one day she walked quietly into the compound when I was busy cutting up fish to dry. She did not speak to me and I was too much ashamed to speak a word to her.

"She sat down on a sunny bench beside the wall and took out her little book. At the sight of it my anger rose

up again. I wanted to snatch the book and fling it over the wall. I don't know why I let her sit there, unless it was because she was so very little and thin; I was just ashamed to touch her.

"Presently she began to read aloud. I would have put my fingers in my ears, but my hands were covered with fish scales. I tried not to listen. But it was a story she was reading and I soon listened in spite of myself. It was about some men in a boat, who got so many fishes all at once that their net broke. I wondered how long it took their wives to dry all those fish.

"She read other stories, too, about those same fishermen. And always there was the man called Jesus with them, and always He was doing something to help them. I couldn't help wishing He would help my man to catch more fish.

"She went away before long, without saying a word to me. It was just as if she hadn't seen me there at all. I was angry, and yet I wished she would come back and read some more stories to me.

"She did come, always just as quiet as a little shadow slipping in the gate. Every week she read more of those stories to me, and every story had Jesus in it. One day when she came my dear little girl had been sick, and in spite of me the tears ran down my face when she read how Jesus came and brought a man's little daughter back to life, after all the mourners had been wailing over her.

"The stories began to grow sadder, and yet I didn't want them to stop. When they told how bad men took the good Jesus and beat Him and spit on Him I could not keep still any longer.

" 'O Sarah,' I cried, 'why didn't He strike them back? Why didn't He fight?' She never answered me, but just kept on reading. When it came to where they put Him on the cross and He prayed, 'Forgive them,' I thought

my heart would break. I sat down and cried like a baby.

"Next Sunday I went to church to hear more about Him. That is how I took the Christian disease, and nobody in our village took it harder. About two months ago my little daughter and I were baptized, though my mother and all my relatives were very much opposed to it. They think I am bewitched. Some day, maybe, Sarah will get them to listen too.

"I have made friends with all my neighbors, and we do not quarrel any more. Sometimes I forget and begin to get angry, but then I stop at once and say 'Pardon!' and we are at peace again. I am praying, and my friends are praying with me, that my husband may stop drinking arrack and take the Christian disease too. Won't you help us pray for him, dear lady?"

"Indeed I will, Engeltina!" I replied heartily.

THE EARS OF HIS ARMY

"Uncle John," said Harold, looking up from the newspaper he was laboriously trying to read, "where is there a country called Opium?"

"Opium, my dear boy? What do you mean? Here, let me see that paper."

Harold handed the paper to his uncle, pointing to a headline which read, "China's War Against Opium at an End."

"Oh, Harold," said Mabel, peeping over Uncle John's shoulder, "don't you know any better than that? Opium isn't a country at all. It's something people smoke, and it makes them crazy."

"Ho!" said Harold scornfully. "How can anybody fight smoke? That's just like a girl. You must have been reading that out of the Chinese fairy tales Uncle John brought you. Tell us what it really is, uncle."

"Mabel is right," said Uncle John. "Opium is a powerful drug, extracted from a beautiful flower—the poppy."

"A flower!" groaned Harold. "That's worse yet. Are they fighting flowers too?"

"Listen quietly, Harold," said his mother from her chair by the window. "Uncle John will tell you all about it if you give him a chance."

Harold and Mabel settled themselves expectantly on either side of Uncle John, prepared to listen. This uncle, who had been a missionary doctor in China and was soon going back again, had so many interesting stories to tell that they were usually silent the moment he opened his lips, expecting to hear some new tale of wonder.

"A great many years ago," began Uncle John, "the Chinese knew the art of making opium from the poppy,

and that its use as a medicine would quiet pain. It was not until the eighteenth century, however, that the habit of smoking it began to spread among the Chinese.

"At first the opium was imported from Burma and India; but then the Chinese began to grow it themselves. Whole fields that once produced grain were given over to the planting of poppies, even though many people in China were starving every year for lack of food.

"The smoking of opium does great harm to the people who use it. It is a habit that consumes a great deal of time, and the longer people smoke it the more they crave it, so that they will often spend most of the day or night dreaming over their pipes. They lose all energy and desire for work; their appetite for wholesome food fails, their flesh wastes away, and they become useless and helpless. If they do not get the chance each day to take their accustomed smoke they suffer intense agony; if deprived of it for some days they become frantic. That is what Mabel was thinking of, I suppose, when she said it made them crazy.

"Besides, it is a costly habit. Men will sell all that they have, make beggars of their families, even sell their children into slavery for a chance to get opium. They seem to lose all conscience and common sense in the grip of that dreadful habit."

"It's as bad as drink, isn't it?" said Mabel. "Didn't anybody try to put a stop to it?"

"Yes," said Uncle John, "many rulers of China made laws to restrain the habit, but it grew and grew, until it was estimated that forty million people, or about one-tenth of the whole population of China were using the drug.

"Then a determined old lady, the Empress Dowager of China, one of the greatest rulers China has ever had, decided that this great evil must cease. Although the Chinese Government got considerable revenue from it, she deter-

mined to blot out the habit once for all. So she made an edict that for the next ten years the land given up to the raising of poppies should be decreased one-tenth each year and planted in useful foodstuffs, until no more poppies were raised. All government officials under sixty years of age who used it were compelled to give it up, and none who did not use it were allowed to begin."

"Did they obey her?" asked Harold.

"Not everybody, and not right away," said Uncle John. "In one province some of the farmers, seeing that others had stopped planting poppies, thought there would be a greater demand, and so they planted large fields of them. The viceroy sent men to dig them up. Next year the farmers planted more and he destroyed them again. The third year, when they tried it, the viceroy said, 'This is not mere disobedience, it is rebellion!' and he sent men who dug graves in the poppy fields, made the farmers kneel on the edge of their graves, cut off their heads, and buried them right there among their poppies. After that people did not try to break the law."

"Have they finished getting rid of the poppies?" asked Harold. "Oh, now I see what the paper means! That was the war against opium, and now it is ended."

"Yes," said their uncle, "if other nations do not try to bring it in to them again. It was a brave fight against a dreadful habit, and only a brave people could have made it.

"I had a funny experience myself when I was in China with an army that used opium," he added. The children edged up closer.

"Near my mission station," he went on, "there was a large post of the Chinese army, commanded by a hot-tempered but well-meaning old general who was a great friend of mine. One day he sent word to me, asking if I would come over to see him on a matter of business. When I arrived I found him evidently much disturbed.

" 'Doctor,' he said, as soon as the indispensable courtesies of a Chinese visit had been disposed of, 'a lot of my men have got hold of some opium, and they are getting to be so worthless that I can't do anything with them. I have ordered all pipes to be broken, but they always get new ones; and I am afraid to take the opium from them all at once, or I shall have a lot of madmen on my hands.

" 'Will you take them over to the hospital and cure them for me? I have heard that your treatment works wonderful cures. After that I'll keep the stuff away from them if I have to cut their heads off to do it.'

"He looked so fierce that I thought he would actually cut somebody's head off, and I didn't want it to be mine. So I said, "But, general, our hospital will not hold a whole army at once, or even a small part of one.'

" 'I'll send them to you in small groups," he said, 'the worst ones first.'

"So next day he came over himself with forty of his men under guard.

" 'Here they are!' he said. 'I've told them to do as you say, or I'll have their ears cut off!'

"They were not a cheerful-looking lot, and they were less so the next day, when they began to miss their pipes. I knew what was coming, so we locked them all in one of the wards where there were iron bars across the windows.

"You never heard such a frightful racket as those poor fellows made when the craving for the drug really got them. Such howls and threats, such prayers and curses I never heard in my life; but I dared not let them out till the craving was conquered. The third night I went to bed and slept in spite of the noise, for I was tired out.

"Near morning I got awake with a confused sense of missing something. The hospital was quiet as the grave. A few minutes later an attendant came to me in great excitement.

"'Doctor,' he said, 'all those soldiers are gone!'

"'Gone!' I said. 'How can that be?'

"'They went wild,' he said. 'They climbed up and crawled through the transoms, and threatened to kill us all if we stopped them. Then they all ran off, and nobody knows where they are.'

"I got up and dressed, looking for more excitement, and it soon came. An orderly from the post came in a terrible hurry about an hour later.

"'O doctor,' he said, shivering as if he had ague, 'do come over quickly! The men have come back and the general is in an awful rage. He is cutting off all their ears.'

"It didn't take me long to get to the post. There I found the old general, red as a turkey cock, with sword in hand, slashing away at the men like a maniac. His own private secretary had been the first man he attacked. Fortunately he was so enraged that his hand was not very steady, and he had only succeeded in slashing bits from some of their ears; but I was mortally afraid he would take more than the ears off some poor fellow if he didn't stop.

"'General,' I cried out as soon as I was within hearing distance, 'what in the world are you doing?'

"He was quite out of breath, for he had been dancing about and abusing the men with all the strength of his lungs. When I hailed him he kept on dancing, but stopped slashing at the ears.

"'I am doing just what I said I would,' he panted. 'It is only right. What use are a soldier's ears if not to hear and obey orders? A soldier who will not obey orders may as well have his ears cut off, for they are of no use to him. Besides, I told them I would do it, and I always keep my word.'

"I saw it was useless to argue with him, but I was bound to save the rest of the ears if I could. So I stood

aside respectfully and said with sorrow in my voice, 'Alas! What will the President of the United States say when he hears of this?'

"The general started as if he had been stung. If there was one thing he was anxious for, it was that his people should have the good opinion of Americans, of whom he professed to think very highly. Many an evening he had discussed American politics with me, after his own fashion, over a cup of tea.

" 'He thinks,' I went on, still more sadly, 'that China is a great and progressive nation; that her army is well disciplined, her generals masters of their men, and using only the modern ways of dealing with them. An American general would never mutilate his men with his own hand, no matter what they did. He might court-martial them, and order them to be imprisoned or even shot, but he would never dream of cutting their ears off. I fear the whole Chinese army will lose face if our President hears that a great general could not make his men obey him without chopping off their ears.'

"The old man grew as white as he had been red. There is nothing that so quickly appeals to the Chinese mind as the fear of 'losing face,' or being discredited and shamed.

" 'But I told them——' he began uncertainly.

" 'Let me talk to them,' I put in hastily. 'Put your sword away, general, and I will promise not to tell the President if you will not cut off any more ears.'

"Then, going over to the men, now thoroughly sobered and scared, I talked to them quietly, assuring them that the worst of their treatment was over, and that in a few more days, if they bore their discomfort bravely, as soldiers ought to, they would be cured. Meantime I would fix up their poor ears if they would come back and do as I said. Otherwise I would leave them all to the tender mercies of the old general.

"Before that gentleman's amazed eyes his forty men were soon marching back with me as quiet as lambs. They were all cured, and later the general sent other detachments for the same purpose. He was a better friend of mine than ever, and was never weary of talking about the wonderful wisdom of Americans, particularly American doctors."

"Wish I could have seen him hopping around with his sword," said Harold. "But I'm glad you made him treat his men better after that."

"Ah, I don't keer for the likes o' her! She ain't none of us. She's just a woman as was fotched on here by somebody to see how we-uns live, an' tell stories about us to people when she gits back home. They's a lot o' curious people in this here world. Don't you-all 'member that feller as come up here on hossback onct? That one as said he were writin' a book, an' he wanted somethin' he called 'local color'?"

"I reckon I do," giggled Sam. "An' paw told him the color he was likely to git was black an' blue, if he come nosin' aroun' in other folkses' business."

"But this here lady ain't like him," said Mandy, unawed by the criticisms of her brothers. "You, Tom an' Sam, you'se just afeard she'll fin' out what a little bit we knows about everythin'."

" 'Tain't our fault if we don't know nothin'," said Tom, husking corn with great energy. "If that there schoolhouse over on Little Pine hadn't 'a burned down, an' nobody never comed to build a new one, we-all would 'a learned as well as anybody. We ain't no dumber than all the folks aroun' here, anyways," he added defensively.

"I just loves to hear her talk," said Mandy, busily shelling beans. "She sure does use the purtiest langwige. I'd give anythin' to talk like she does."

"Shucks, that ain't nothin'!" said Sam. "That's just put on. But she is rode on steam engines, an' saw big cities; I likes to hear her tell about them there."

"How do you-all know what she talks about?" said Mandy. "Las' night you-all went tearin' off to bed like a couple o' wild sheep. Maw sent me off before I

was ready; I did want to hear her tell about them there girls she knows, what goes to school an' learns readin' an' writin' an' all sich. I'd give the ears off'n my head to go to school like that."

"Maybe we-all did go up the loft," said Sam, "but there's a mighty good hole there to listen at. Yes, you-all did it, too," he said, shaking an accusing finger at Tom, who grinned and looked sheepish.

" 'Twas when she was tellin' about them there airy-planes I got to listenin'," he confessed. "I do think it's right smart of a lie, but I likes to hear it anyway."

"Let's we-all ask to sit up tonight," said Mandy eagerly. "If maw sees you boys wants to listen she won't sen' me off to bed so powerful early."

The late fall evening darkened over the top of Great Pine Mountain, and the day's chores were all done. The children's fingers had been busy all day, and they were glad to gather quietly around the fire and listen to what the guest from the outside world had to say.

"There is going to be frost tonight, I am sure," said Mrs. Lang, their visitor, rubbing her hands before the cheery blaze. "It feels like Christmas coming; doesn't it, Mandy?"

"Chris'mus!" said Mandy, forgetting her shyness. "Oh, no; I hopes it's a long time yet till Chris'-mus comes."

"Why, Mandy, what do you mean? I thought all boys and girls loved Christmas and were glad to see it come," said Mrs. Lang in astonishment.

"Oh, no, lady; not up here on Great Pine!" declared Mandy with a shudder.

"What does Christmas mean to you, Mandy, dear?" asked Mrs. Lang gently. Mandy allowed herself to be drawn a little nearer.

"Oh, it's an awful time!" she replied in a hushed voice. "The men all gits together, an' gits lots an' lots o' whiskey from the stills——"

"Sh-h-h!" came a warning whisper from Tom.

"Well, I ain't tellin' where none on 'em is," Mandy answered to the hiss. "Everybody knows as there is stills in these here mountains, where whiskey gets made. An' they drinks an' drinks," she went on, turning to the lady again; "an' goes out an' shoots, an' sometimes somebody gets killed. Us children, an' the women folks, dassent stir out o' the house. Chris'mus! Why, lady, if somebody come an' telled us there'd never be no more Chris'mus I reckon I'd be so glad I'd dance an' sing!"

"Mandy," said the tired voice of her sad-faced mother from the other side of the fireplace, "Chris'-mus ain't like that everywheres. I use' to hear about it when I was a girl. You ask the lady, won't she please tell you-all about her kind o' Chris'mus?"

It took no urging. The children hung spellbound on Mrs. Lang's tales of the great stores hung with holly and mistletoe, and the counters loaded with beautiful things; of the homes where happy children decked Christmas trees and hung stockings; of the churches where the fir and the pine were garlanded, and the children sang carols.

"I guess that's a city Chris'mus," said Mandy, shaking her wise little head solemnly. "It ain't no mountain Chris'mus anyways!"

Then, like a bolt out of a clear sky, came an unlooked-for question from Sam, who had not opened his mouth before.

"What's it all about, anyways?" he demanded.

Mrs. Lang drew a deep breath. Suddenly she realized

that the Star of Bethlehem had never risen on Great Pine Mountain. These children had not the slightest idea what Christmas was about.

"Why, it is Christ-mas, you know," she explained. "The day of Christ—His birthday."

"Christ? Who's He?" That was Sam again.

The lady felt more and more puzzled. How could she explain it all?

"He is the Saviour," she said. "He came from heaven to earth, and was born a little baby on the first Christmas, to save everybody from their sins."

"What sins?"

"Bad things—wrong things, like stealing and killing——"

"An' shootin', an' tellin' lies, an' sich," broke in the eager Mandy. "We done heard onct about George Washin'ton, an' how he never tol' a lie. Is Christ like him?"

"Yes, like him, and a great deal better," said Mrs. Lang. "Christ never did anything that was wrong. He came to show people how to do what was right and good always."

" 'Pears to me," said another voice, "I done heard about Him onct when I was little." Tom had actually been drawn into the conversation. "Maw," he went on, "didn't a man come here one time, long ago, what tol' about Him? Wasn't His mother's name Mary, like yourn?"

The mother was rocking herself back and forth, crying softly.

"Oh, yes, Tommy boy!" she answered. "You done heard on Him when you was little, an' I knowed about Him, long time ago. But all on us has forgotten Him all these years, up here on Great Pine. I reckon that's

why we-all has such hard times, an' the whiskey makes the men so crazy. Go on, lady dear, tell us more about Him."

The story of the angels and the shepherds fell on eagerly listening ears. Then the Wise Men and the star; and here a new voice, gruff and harsh, joined in.

"If I'd 'a been there I'd 'a shot that there ol' king!" It was the children's father; he had come in so softly that none of them had known he was there.

"We can still help to destroy the things that fight against the Christ-child," said Mrs. Lang quietly. "Everything that hurts people and makes them do wicked things is an enemy of His for us to fight against."

"Whisky, an' shootin', an' gamblin'," commented Mandy, catching the point immediately, "an' lyin', an' stealin', an'——"

"Shut up, Mandy, an' let the lady go on!" said Sam. "An' what did they do when they foun' the ol' king was just foolin'?"

So the story was told to its end—the Christmas story, never heard before in that lonely cabin on the mountains.

"You can read, can't you, Mrs. Luckett?" asked Mrs. Lang, turning to her hostess.

"Not very good; but my man, there, he use' to be a fine reader," said the woman, pointing to her husband.

"I must leave you tomorrow," began the lady, only to be interrupted by a cry from Mandy.

"Oh, don't go back! We-all needs you to stay here, an' tell us things we don't know."

"I must go, dear Mandy," repeated Mrs. Lang; "but if your father will read it to you sometimes I will

leave a little book with you which will give you all the story I have been telling you, and many more about this same dear Christ. Will you, Mr. Luckett?"

The big man's sun-browned hand closed awkwardly over the little Testament. "I'll try," he said, much embarrassed.

"That there was a Bible you give him, wasn't it?" whispered his wife. "We'll sure coax him to read it to us."

And little Mandy came and put her arms around the visitor's neck. "I'm goin' to watch for the brightest star I can fin' when Chris'mus comes," she declared, "an' make believe as it's the star them there Wise Men saw. I won't be so much afeard o' Chris'mus now, even if we can't have a city one."

Mrs. Lang kissed her, resolving in her heart that a box should come up Great Pine a little later, which would bring at least a bit of a "city Christmas" to this bare little cabin. But she knew that a more powerful spell was at work, through the little book clasped in the hardened hand of the gaunt mountaineer; and her heart was glad, for she knew that at last the Star had risen on Great Pine.

"But it is not possible!" said Deacon Kim.

"Our people could never do it!" declared Mr. Song.

"I know it is asking a great deal of you," said Doctor Gray, the visiting missionary, "but I did hope you could see your way to support your own preacher. You don't realize what it would mean to you to have a pastor, one of your own Korean men who has been trained for the ministry, living right here among you, preaching to you every week and visiting in your homes, instead of having church service only once in several weeks."

"We do know," said Deacon Kim, "that it would be a wonderful thing for us. But it is not possible. Our people are too poor. They could never raise fifteen yen a month."

There was a stir in the far corner where the women sat.

"And who said we could not?" said the cracked voice of old Grandma Ko.

"And why couldn't we try?" inquired Mrs. Cho, respectfully but firmly.

Doctor Gray turned to their corner.

"May we hear our sisters speak?" he said. "What have they to suggest?"

It was Chanie Song, the bright, pretty daughter of Mr. Song, who came forward. She had been away to study at the mission school and could read and write, to the admiration of the whole village.

"Preacher and fathers," she said with the prettiest little bow, "we have been thinking of what you said,

back there in the corner. We think you said this could not be done, because you were thinking of us. You did not want to promise to pay out money that might make the women and children suffer want. But we think we would not need to suffer if everybody would help. Suppose there would be a great festival day, like a visit from a famous general or king. What would we do? We would all put away our work and go out to see him, and we would say, 'I can do without the money I would have earned that day, for it was worth more to see the great man.' And if your child were to graduate from the mission school you would leave all your work and go two-three days' journey to see the exercises, as my father did for me." Her eyes dwelt lovingly on her father's face, and he smiled back at her proudly.

"So, then," went on Chanie, "we do not starve, even if we do not work every day. Suppose there were twelve such days in every year; would any of us starve to death?"

"No-o," came rather reluctantly from the fathers.

"Well, then," said Chanie, "we could afford to give one day a month, on which all the time was given to God, and all the money we earned would be for the church. Could we not?"

"Yes!" said Grandma Ko as loudly as she could.

"Even if each man gave a day a month, Chanie," said Deacon Kim kindly, "the earnings of them all would not be fifteen yen."

"But I do not mean just the men!" said Chanie. "We will all work to earn something that day, even the little children. We have counted, and there are one hundred and seventy-four men, women and children who belong to this church and Sunday school. Surely, if each gave a day's work we could raise fifteen yen!"

"I will make straw shoes!" cried Grandma Ko eagerly. "I can do that well."

"And I will dye cloth," said Mrs. Cho. "I can get all of that work I can do from the weavers here in the town."

"I can pull weeds," lisped Deacon Kim's youngest child, manly little Chun, standing up very straight.

There was no more objecting after that. One after another came forward, pledging a day of time that month for God. Some told what they expected to do; others said they would do anything they could find to do, or help those who had more work than they could do alone. Several women offered to help Mrs. Cho, because the demand for the dyeing of cloth was always so large.

"Chanie is a wonderful girl," said more than one neighbor to proud Mr. Song as they passed out of the church that night. "She has more ideas, and better ones, than all the rest of us put together."

"That is because of the mission school teaching," said her delighted father.

The day was set for the time when Chanie's plan should first be tried.

"What are you going to do, Chanie?" asked Mrs. Cho, stopping on her way to the weaver's.

Chanie pointed to a heap of white linen, yards and yards of it, lying on the floor like a great snow drift.

"Mother and I are going to make suits of this," she said. Men in Korea, if they are of any consequence at all, love to be dressed always in the whitest and stiffest of linen suits. The skillful fingers of Mrs. Song and her daughter would fashion suits that a prince would be glad to purchase.

"Mrs. Wun will have the handling of them some day," laughed Mrs. Cho. "She is going to wash suits and iron them."

"I am helping, too," spoke up little Mokie Song from the floor at her sister's feet. "Chanie said I could pull basting threads. Chanie sews so nice; she makes all my clothes. She learned to do it at the school."

"Here comes your brother, Ke," said Mrs. Cho. "I see he has been up the mountain for dried grass."

Ke Song came clattering along the street with a great bundle of dried grass on his head; he was going to sell it for fuel.

"Father has gone for a load of firewood," he said. "He can sell all he can haul. I can only make a few trips for grass today because I have errands to run for the grocer; he said he would pay me five sen, because he will have some long trips for me to take with a heavy basket." (A sen is equal to about one cent in our money; a yen is a hundred sen, or a dollar. Wages are very low in Korea, so that fifteen yen means far more there than fifteen dollars with us.)

"Five sen is good wages for a boy," said Mrs. Cho, "and you have your grass to sell besides. But I have stopped too long to chatter; the cloth will be waiting for me." And she hurried on.

"I met little Chun Kim," said Ke laughing, "with a basket of weeds nearly as big as himself. He is helping his father cultivate grain, and Deacon Kim is as proud as he can be to see how the little fellow works. Grandma Ko is busy too; she called out to me to tell you that she had gotten up early, and had one pair of shoes almost done."

"They will do it," said Chanie as her busy fingers flew. "They will all do it, and we shall earn the money."

There was a meeting in the church the next evening, and every man, woman and child who attended the little church had brought or sent an offering. When Mr. Song, the treasurer, had counted the money, with the help of the other church officers, everyone sat breathless to hear the result. Mr. Song had to clear his throat several times before he could speak.

"Dear friends," he said at last, "we have given our day to God, and He has blessed it. Instead of fifteen yen, which we thought we could not raise, we have here on the table eighteen yen; and, best of all, we have the promise of every one of us to give a day to God each month, as long as He gives us health and strength."

And Chanie, leaning forward with shining eyes, squeezed her mother's hand very tight, and whispered, "I knew we could do it."

"What in the world are those girls doing?" asked Miss Brown, head teacher of the Mission School for Girls in Liberia, of her assistant, Mammy Sue, the portly colored matron.

"Oh, Miss Brown, dem girls is jus' wil' to go in de ribber!" declared Mammy Sue, shaking her head portentously. "Dey boun' to go, eben when I tell 'em dey get drownded."

"Poor children!" laughed Miss Brown, fanning herself with her hat. "I don't blame them for wanting to get into the water. I would like to be there myself and try to forget this blistering heat."

"Yes'm, Miss Brown, dat's true; but you ain't been here so bery long, an' you-all don't know how dangerous it is in dat ribber. Las' year, when de men was workin' on de new buildin', seben ob 'em done got drownded at once. Yes'm! And ebery year somebody gets drownded in it. Dese here people say de ribber-god has to hab a sacrifice ebery year. 'Course I don't pay no 'tention to dat. I is from de States" (Mammy Sue never lets anybody forget that) "an I knows dere ain't no such foolishness. But dese here ignorant Africa niggers believes all sorts ob t'ings."

"Why isn't there a bridge over the river, so we don't have to cross in those miserable little canoes?" inquired Miss Brown, remembering sundry uncomfortable and risky voyages.

"Don't know, ma'am, unless it costs too much money to make one. De people back in de States would t'ink it took right smart ob money, I reckon, to put a bridge ober dis crazy little ribber, what runs away

tossin' its head like a wil' hoss when de rains makes it full."

Miss Brown glanced out at the river, dancing over its rocks, with many swirls and eddies, and thought how well Mammy Sue's comparison described the toss of white foam over the boulders. Concern for the girls began to invade her mind.

"Have they gone down to the river to bathe?" she inquired, beginning to tie on her hat.

"Bless you, honey, dey is all gone down dere long ago. I jus' couldn't keep dem away nohow. I tol' 'em crocodile get dem, but dey jus' laugh, an' go runnin' down de bank like a passel ob ducks."

Miss Brown had already started down the steep bank toward the river, when the shrieks of delight from the girls playing in the water became howls of terror. Out of the river came some dozens of shiny black forms, all screaming so loudly that the words they were shouting could not be heard. And down in the river a scaly back and ugly long snout appeared, and around it a red stain could be seen spreading on the water.

"Crocodile! Crocodile!" The cries became clear at last.

"They are dragging something!" exclaimed Miss Brown in horror. "Somebody has been bitten!"

By the time she reached the children the crocodile had disappeared again. The black huddle of shivering little girls separated to let her through.

"Oh, Miss Brown," sobbed the children, "he done bit Rhoda's leg off!"

"It was de ol' ribber-god," said one. "He boun' to get somebody ebery year. Oh, Miss Brown, do get a roll ob cloth or a knife or somet'ing an' t'row it in de ribber, so de ribber-god get no mo' ob us."

"Hush, you silly children!" said Miss Brown with authority. "Here you have been taken, some of you several years ago, from your homes in the bush, and taught book" (the African name for schooling) "and given Christian names instead of your heathen ones, and as soon as a crocodile comes along you want to sacrifice to the river-god. I'm ashamed of you."

While she spoke the teacher had gathered up little Rhoda in her arms, regardless of the bleeding leg, and was carrying her swiftly up the hill to the school. A very subdued flock of girls followed her, carrying their clothes, on which they secretly wiped their eyes, and perhaps also their broad, flat noses. They were sniffling softly now; Rhoda was the quietest of the group. She had not screamed at all after the first shock.

"Is her leg bit off?" queried Mammy Sue in awe.

"Not a mite of it," answered Miss Brown cheerfully, seeing Rhoda's wide, horror-filled eyes fixed on her face. "The old crocodile was hungry, and he thought Rhoda looked plump and tender; but he'll have to go hungry today, for we can't spare him even one little toe of our Rhoda. Can we, honey?" she asked tenderly. A wan smile crossed Rhoda's lips.

"Now, Mammy Sue, bring me some hot water, and I'll get my medicine case and some bandages, and we'll have Rhoda comfortable in no time. All you girls go and dress, and then get your sewing and sit on the veranda with it. You've had enough excitement for one day."

The wound made by the crocodile's teeth was long and jagged, but no bones were broken. Miss Brown quickly disinfected and bound it up, and put Rhoda to bed to sleep away her fright.

"Dere's boun' to be trouble ober dis, Miss Brown," said Mammy Sue gloomily as the teacher put away

her remedies. "Dose people ob Rhoda's ain't goin' to stay at home when dey hears about dis. You can reckon on dat."

"How will they hear about it, Mammy Sue?" asked Miss Brown. "Her village, she told me, is far up in the bush, and I am sure there is no telephone or telegraph out here."

"Neber you min', honey," said Mammy Sue impressively. "You see dem people from de village down by de ribber? Dey was standin' aroun' watchin' from de time de girls began to scream. An' you listen to dat!"

The irregular tapping of a native drum was sounding from the village at the foot of the hill. It was a common sound, and Miss Brown had hardly noticed it. Now it caught her ear, and she realized that it was being tapped in peculiar groups of sounds, like a telegraphic code.

"Dey sends all de news miles an' miles dat way," said Mammy Sue. "You can jus' look out for Rhoda's people along here about dis evenin'."

Sure enough, only a few hours had passed when a motley band of native Africans could be seen climbing the hill to the schoolhouse. Arriving at the top, they began to clamor for the teacher in a mixture of native dialect and that sort of "pidgin English"—learned originally from traders—which the people of Liberia fondly imagine to be good American.

"You be bad woman for true-true. You let dem crocodile eat our chil'; you put spell on our children. We go tell ebery town; dey not sen' you children here no mo'. Plenty girls go home. Plenty people come here, tear down ol' school, t'row you in ribber; crocodile eat you."

Miss Brown stood her ground bravely. Several times she tried to speak, but the crowd was not ready

to listen. The girls peeped out of the doors and windows with ashy faces; the people from the village at the foot of the hill gathered near, enjoying the scene.

At last the noisy throats grew hoarse and the crowd became quiet. Then Miss Brown said, "Now, let one person speak at a time, and tell me what you are making all this noise about."

An elderly man, who proved to be the head-man of Rhoda's village, proceeded to make a long speech. It was not right, he said, to take children from their parents and let them be eaten by crocodiles and wild beasts. The whole country would rise and destroy the school if this went on. Besides, the river-god was now very angry at losing his prey, and would surely take other lives in revenge.

"Do you mean," asked Miss Brown calmly, "that I should have let the crocodile have the little girl, so that the river god would be satisfied?" While the head-man paused to digest the question she went on: "The child might just as easily have been caught by a leopard at home in the bush, or bitten by a snake in the long grass. There you would have had no medicines, and no one to care for her as we are doing. Everything has been done for her, and she will be well again in a short time."

But the friends of the little girl insisted stubbornly that she must go home with them at once and never come back to this bad place. The teacher was deceiving them; the child had lost her whole leg, perhaps both of them. Perhaps she would die. How could they know? They would take her home, and she could be buried where her people lived.

"Let the child's father and mother come in and see her," said Miss Brown at last in desperation. "They

can see for themselves that she is not dying, has both her legs, and is not anxious to be taken home."

Timidly the parents ventured into the house. Stairs they had never seen before, and they ascended them crouching, almost on their hands and knees. In spite of her anxiety, Miss Brown could hardly help laughing.

Rhoda lay awake in her white bed smiling serenely. She let her parents examine her little black leg in its bandages, wiggling her toes obligingly to show that she was still in one piece. When they proposed taking her home she was ready with her refusal.

"No, daddy! No, mammy! Don't ask me to go home with you. I lobe dis place, an' de girls, an' de teacher, an' I want to stay. What you do if I go home? You take fire, an' you burn my leg to take de poison out. Miss Brown, she put good medicine on it, dat take de burn away; I like dat much better, fo' true-true! You sen' fo' dat ol' witch doctor, an' he make big noise all night—yell loud, shake rattle, fo' to scare bad spirits away. Miss Brown, I hear her say, 'Hush, girls, be very quiet all dis afternoon; poor little Rhoda want to sleep so she get well quick.' Dat much nicer fo' Rhoda. Maybe you kill chicken, t'row it in de ribber, fo' to make dat ol' ribber-god's heart lay down good. What Miss Brown do? She kill chicken too; but she not t'row him in de ribber. She make nice chicken broth fo' Rhoda. I t'ink dat much mo' sense fo' to do with a chicken! Daddy, mammy, I come here to catch sense. Want to learn book. Some day I come back an' tell you plenty t'ings I learn here. You go home; Rhoda stay here an' learn."

When the crowd had at last departed, in high good humor over the "dash," or present of pins, beads and other small articles which Miss Brown ordered Mam-

my Sue to give them, the teacher came and sat beside the little girl's bed in the sunset glow.

"Tell me, Rhoda," she said, "why were you so anxious to stay with us?"

"Oh, Miss Brown," said the little girl with tears in her big, soft eyes, "you been so good to me; take such good care; always speak kin'. I know you do it because you lobe Jesus. Rhoda lobe Jesus, too; want to learn mo' about Him; some day go back an' tell people in de bush all about dat good Jesus."

"Do you mean you want to tell your father and mother and the other people in your village about Jesus, Rhoda, dear?"

"Yes, Miss Brown, an' plenty mo' people too. Want to go 'way back in de bush, where people neber hear one word about Him, an' tell all ob dem Jesus makes people good an' kin'; tell de truth, neber say bad words, help ebery one. Tell dem all to come an' learn about Jesus."

And Miss Brown kissed the prospective missionary good-night, very thankful indeed that the crocodile had missed his dinner that day.

BY THE SIDE OF THE STREAM

Mei Ling was a little Chinese girl. If she had lived in America she would have been going to school and helping her mother at home, and would hardly have been thinking at all about going away to a home of her own. But, being in China, she was considered quite old enough to be married.

"Our daughter," said Mei Ling's mother to her father one day, "is growing to be a woman. It is time she should have a husband. I must speak to the go-between."

So Mei Ling's mother sent for Chun Lei, the go-between. She was an elderly woman, whose business it was to arrange marriages; that is, as her title shows, to go between the family of the girl who is to be married and the family of some young man who wants a wife. The whole thing is arranged by this woman. It would be very much out of place in China for a man to go and ask directly for the girl he wanted to marry.

First of all, Chun Lei found out from Mei Ling's mother the year, day and hour of the little girl's birth. This was taken to a fortune teller, to be compared with the date of the young man's birth, so as to see whether it would do for them to marry. If the signs under which they were born did not agree, then they would quarrel and be unhappy all their lives, and it would be very unlucky for them to marry.

"I have found a young man whose birth sign is very lucky," announced Chun Lei, coming into the house a few days later, "and his family sends an offer of marriage to Mei Ling."

A few days later came the betrothal presents from the young man's family. These were gifts of tea, cakes, betel-nuts and money, in flat, round boxes made of wood.

Now Mei Ling was engaged to be married, and must stay in the house until her wedding day. If callers came, she must not see them but must go at once into another room. If she went to visit her relatives, it must be in a tightly-closed sedan chair.

She had never seen her future husband; she knew that his name was Chang Fu, but beyond that he was an utter stranger to her. Even her parents had never seen him; but his parents had made the proper betrothal gifts, and that was all that was necessary.

At last all the ceremonies had been duly performed; the marriage contract was signed and the money paid over to Mei Ling's father. It did not occur to him that he was really selling his little daughter. The Chinese think it is only right that the parents of a girl should be paid when they let their daughter go out of their home and lose her services. It was the custom of their country, and neither Mei Ling nor her parents saw anything wrong about it.

Then came the wedding day. All the girls who used to play with Mei Ling had been at her house for some days before the wedding, to weep with her over leaving her home. All the fine clothes that had been made for her were carried to the home of her betrothed, being borne in procession through the streets by servants in red jackets. This was to show everybody how well Mei Ling was provided for.

"Here comes the bridal chair!" exclaimed one of the girls, who had been peeping out into the street to watch for its coming.

It was a very large, heavy sedan chair, with a great deal of carving on it, and decorated with kingfishers' feathers. Nobody but a bride could ever ride in it. There was quite a procession of people with it carrying lanterns and playing on drums and cymbals.

"The bridegroom's friend has brought the letter," said another girl, skurrying back from the door. The girls were not weeping and wailing now, but were just as much excited as American girls would be, tittering and crowding around Mei Ling as she came forward to receive the letter. It was written on red paper tinged with gold, and was an invitation from the bridegroom for Mei Ling to come to his home.

Mei Ling, with her face completely hidden by a veil of red silk, entered the great bridal chair, and was carried away to the home of her betrothed. As the chair was set down at his door he rapped on it with his fan; then the bridesmaids opened the chair and Mei Ling, still veiled, stepped out.

The bridegroom went before her into the house and took his seat on a high stool. Mei Ling prostrated herself before him, to show that she would be an obedient wife. Then he came down from his stool, drew away the red veil, and for the first time saw the face of his little wife.

And now Mei Ling was Mrs. Chang Fu, and lived in the house of Chang Fu's parents. She was an obedient little daughter-in-law, and her new relatives were kind to her; but Chang Fu was an only son and spoiled as such only sons are likely to be, and she soon found out that he had a very hot temper.

It was not often that he was angry with her, for she was very careful to please him; but she trembled when she heard him abusing the servants, though his

father and mother only laughed and said, "See what a lordly spirit he has!"

One day Mei Ling was going in a sedan chair to visit her parents, when a crowd in the street stopped the bearers who carried the chair. Mei Ling looked out to see what was going on, and right beside her she saw a foreigner, in strange American clothes, talking to the people.

Mei Ling did not understand all he said, but she liked the song he sang after he had done speaking. It was an old, old song, but it was new to Mei Ling, for the stranger sang "Jesus loves me" to the very same tune we sing, but the words were Chinese.

Mei Ling did not know that anybody loved her except her parents; but the man said that Jesus loved everybody. All day long Mei Ling kept thinking about the song the foreigner had sung.

Next time she went on a visit she passed a little chapel and heard the same song.

She asked questions of the servants, and one of them told her that she went quite often to the little chapel to hear about the loving Jesus. The chapel was on the other side of a little stream, and it was not always easy to get there, but Mei Ling had a cousin living on that side and she made an excuse to visit her often, and stopped at the chapel on the way.

Presently Mei Ling had become a regular worshiper at the little prayer house, and had heard the story of Jesus and His wonderful love. Again and again she went, for she could not stay away.

She would have liked to be baptized, but she felt sure Chang Fu would never allow it. He was a very devout worshiper of the gods, and had no love for the "foreign devils."

"Chang Fu," said one of his friends one day, "why does your wife go so often to the foreign prayer house beyond the stream?"

Then Chang Fu went home in a towering rage and said, "Mei Ling, what does this mean? I hear that you have been worshiping with the foreign devils!"

Poor little Mei Ling was very much frightened, but she looked up bravely and said, "It is true."

Chang Fu raised his hand and struck her a blow that made her cheek burn for hours. Mei Ling cried bitterly, but next day she went again to the chapel.

This time Chang Fu beat her with a stick. Had she not promised to obey him, and was it not his business to make her do it? But Mei Ling, bruised and sore, waited a few days and then persuaded the bearers to take her to the chapel again.

There was still a harder thing to bear that night, when Mei Ling had to listen to the cruel strokes that Chang Fu laid across the backs of the bearers before he came to punish her. She was not to go out any more in the chair; indeed, the bearers would refuse to take her.

"Then I must walk," said Mei Ling to herself, looking at her little bound feet. She had never walked out of doors since she was a tiny girl, except with a servant on each side to support her.

But it was the only way; so one day, when Chang Fu was out of the house and his mother was asleep, she slipped out and tottered along the road to the chapel.

It was slow work, and just as she had reached the bank of the little stream and was wondering how she would ever manage to cross the stepping stones, she heard an angry shout behind her.

It was Chang Fu, and he was running after her. She could not possibly get away from him.

Down on the ground knelt trembling little Mei Ling.

"O Jesus," she prayed, "I must go to worship! Change my husband's heart. Take away the angry spirit and make him a Christian."

She heard steps close to her now, but she did not open her eyes or stop praying.

Chang Fu stopped to listen. Over and over again he heard the words, "Change my husband's heart and make him a Christian."

He hardly knew why, but all of a sudden the anger was gone from his heart. He heard the song, "Jesus loves me," swelling out from the little chapel across the stream. He looked down at his little wife, trembling with fear but praying on bravely.

Suddenly Mei Ling felt strong arms about her and there was no anger in their touch. She opened her eyes, fearfully, and, behold, Chang Fu was carrying her across the stepping stones and up the slope to the little prayer house!

Together they entered the chapel; together they sat on one of the rough benches and bent their heads over the same hymn book. And all the time Mei Ling was saying in her happy heart, "Thank you, dear Jesus, thank you! I knew you could do it!"

WHEN THE DATES WERE RIPE

"Waken, Yusuf! Waken, Ali!" called Sidi ben Saada to his sons. "Praise be to Allah, there is a bountiful crop of dates; but if my lazy ones do not arise, how shall they be gathered?"

The boys rubbed their sleepy eyes, then scrambled to their feet and ran to the door. All the people who lived in the little town on the edge of the desert seemed to be astir. Boys and men armed with sickles, or leading donkeys loaded with boxes, went hurrying by; while the tiny children, too young to help in the date gathering, toddled after them as fast as they could go, for a share in the fun.

"Take Fatima! Fatima wants to go!" cried the little sister, as Ali and Yusuf were about to hurry away without waiting for such trifles as face washing or breakfast.

"It is late," said Yusuf impatiently. "Fatima is so slow."

But Ali, who had turned aside and held out his hand to the little girl, said, "Go, then, Yusuf. Fatima and I will come after you. She is too little to go alone."

"Let her stay, then," muttered Yusuf, hastening on.

When they reached the great garden of date palms many hands were already busy gathering the fruit. Up one tree went quickly a small boy with a sickle. Another followed him, stopping a little way below him; then another and another, till the long stem of the palm was dotted with clinging boys.

While Ali and Fatima were still some distance away, they heard the song of thanks which everybody in the garden joined in chanting before the first clus-

ter of dates was cut. Then the boy at the top cut a bunch of golden dates with his sickle, and handed it to the boy below him. He passed the bunch to the next boy, and so on, until it was seized by a boy standing on the ground.

Then the bunch was carried to a group of men who were squatting on the ground, ready to sort the dates and pack them into boxes.

Now the sport began. As the tree was stripped of its fruit the smallest children gathered under it, ready for the hunting of rats, which live in great numbers among the palm trees.

"I see a rat, Ali! I see one!" cried tiny Fatima in delight. "Yusuf, throw me a stick!"

The rats, running from the boys, went to the ends of the branches and tried to hide under the leaves.

"Shake it now! Shake the branch!" screamed the children below, wild with delight.

Yusuf shook a branch, and a fat gray rat fell from the leaves. There was a shout of joy, and the children fell over one another in a scramble to secure the strange plaything.

The child who succeeded in getting it carried it at once to an old Arab who sat by, waiting to be called upon for this purpose. He cut off the sharp teeth of the rat, fastened to its hind leg a string of palm fiber, and gave it back to its young owner, a safe but unhappy plaything.

Meantime more rats were being shaken among the children, and loud were the cries as each fat victim was seized by a small pair of hands. Little Fatima was rather timid, and for some time no rat fell to her share.

Her lips began to quiver; but Ali, who by this time had climbed a tree, called down to her, "Do not cry,

Fatima, dear one! There are plenty of rats; every child will have one or two, and I will see that you get some. Then, when the day's work is done, we will kill them, and I will cook yours over the coals for you to eat."

Not one of the Arabs saw any cruelty in giving the rats to the children to be tormented all day before they were killed. It was the custom of the desert, and that made it right in their eyes.

At last Ali succeeded in shaking a fine rat right into his little sister's hands.

"Catch him by the back, Fatima," he cried. But tiny Fatima was afraid and held the big rat fearfully by its tail. Suddenly a shriek arose, and Ali came down almost as quickly as the rat.

"He has bitten me!" sobbed poor Fatima. Sidi ben Saada came up in haste, hearing the cry of his small daughter; and a neighbor's little girl ran quickly off to tell Fatima's mother.

Soon a circle of sympathizing friends were busy suggesting remedies.

"Burn it, and kill the poison," said one. "Cut out the bitten spot," cried another, flourishing a sickle. Fatima screamed louder than ever. "No, no," said an old grandmother soothingly. "A nice poultice of spiders would be the best."

Ali, who was greatly distressed, because he had thrown his little sister the rat which had hurt her, pulled gently at his father's sleeve.

"Shall I get the hakim (doctor)?" he asked

"It is no use," said Sidi. "He has gone three days' journey to the marriage of his sister; he will not be back for a week."

"But the rat-bite will poison our Fatima," persisted

Ali, almost crying himself. "Let me get the hakim lady from the Mission school."

"She would not come," said Sidi gloomily. "She asked me one day for Fatima to come to the—what did she call it?"

"Kindergarten," said Ali.

"And I said," continued his father, "that it was not worth while, because girls have no brains and cannot learn.

" 'But I have learned to read and write,' she said, 'and I am a woman.'

"Then I said to her, 'Yes, but you have no husband! If our girls learn, no one will want to marry them; nobody wants a wife who knows as much as he does; for then she will not obey him. You could not get a husband yourself, or you would not be unmarried.'

"Then she walked away. I know she was much offended, and she surely would not come if we sent for her."

"Will you let her come to Fatima if she is willing?" said Ali breathlessly.

His father hesitated, but the little girl still screamed, and the wound was beginning to look red and angry; so he nodded his head, and Ali was off like an arrow.

Of course, the hakim lady was only too glad to come to little Fatima; and that is how, when the Mission kindergarten opened the next month, there was a new pupil from the house of Sidi ben Saada. And the hakim lady said to the kindergarten teacher, "You may thank Ali for that. He is the kindest-hearted and the quickest-witted boy I have learned to know here; I am going to ask his father to let me teach him medicine, so that some day he can be a hakim, and cure rat-bites that little folks get when the dates are gathered."

ON MARTA'S WEDDING DAY

Marta and Miguel were going to be married. Angelita, Marta's little sister, was very much excited about it. She ran in and out, and asked so many questions that Marta said, "One would think it was Angelita who was to be married. She is the busiest one in the house."

"But the wedding dress, Marta!" said Angelita. "Will I not run and tell Donna Petra not to let anyone else have it tomorrow? Somebody might rent it before you!"

"Foolish child!" said Marta. "Do you think I have not engaged the dress from Petra, three—yes, four weeks ago? Would I wait till the day before, and that with Juanita to be married soon, and she would not tell me when? Be easy in your mind, little sister; tomorrow Petra will come and bring the dress."

"Oh," said Angelita, much relieved, "I was afraid you had forgotten!"

"Let me tell you a secret, Angelita," continued Marta, "but tell no one, for it is a great surprise for the guests. The school-mistress, because I have done her washing all this year, has promised that I may have the box with the horn, to play music for my wedding!"

"O Marta, Marta!" cried Angelita in rapture, "how fine that will be! Will she play it for the dancing?"

"No," said Marta, regretfully, "she says she has no dances; but it can play a wedding-march, just like the people in her country have at their weddings; and after we come back from church she will play it for us, and some more of her beautiful music."

Angelita had heard the gramophone several times, but it was still a novelty to her, and she danced and clapped her hands until Marta was dizzy.

"Be still, and I will tell you one thing more," she said. "Because Petra is my friend, she is going to rent me her pearl cross for the same as if I had only the dress and veil. Will not Juanita be envious of my fine things?"

"The pearl cross!" said Angelita, crossing her little forehead devoutly. "Marta, it has not been used since Donna Petra's own sister was married. She always wants so high a rent for it."

"But she is going to let me wear it," said Marta, in high glee. "Miguel even does not know! Will he not be surprised?"

People of the laboring class in Mexico do not buy wedding clothes for themselves; they rent a complete outfit for five dollars, wear it on the wedding day, and then go back to every-day garments. One good thing about this plan is that there is no hurry and worry or driving of the dressmaker before the wedding, and the bride need not stand to be fitted. A tuck will make the dress ready for a short wearer, a flounce will make it long enough for a tall one; as to the fit, one need not be too particular, for the veil will hide defects.

There was but one wedding-dress in the little village where Marta lived, and that was owned and rented by her friend, Donna Petra. Early on the morning of the wedding day Petra arrived with the wedding dress in charge. She would put it on Marta; stay by her side all day, to see that no harm came to the bridal array; and, finally, after the dancing in the evening, would carry the whole outfit home, with the money paid for its rent. Sometimes it was necessary to keep

an eye on the dress, though Petra would have trusted Marta with anything she owned.

After the wedding party returned from the church, the bride stood on the platform in a little booth made of lace curtains and hung all around with small mirrors and bright pictures.

Here she received the congratulations of her friends and saw that refreshments were distributed among them. The groom is not at all necessary for this part of the performance; he may go to church and be married in his working clothes, and then go to work and return only in time for the dancing.

In the afternoon, after her school was dismissed, the Mission teacher came, followed by a man carrying the precious gramophone. By this time Marta was very tired of standing on her platform, so she took advantage of the new excitement to find a chair and rest before the dancing should begin.

While the strains of the wedding-march were charming the guests, Angelita slipped over to her sister.

"Dear Marta," she whispered, "Donna Petra ran home to see that Carlos does not forget to milk the cow. Won't you let me wear the pearl cross just a little while? O Marta, do!"

Marta looked doubtful; but Angelita was a careful little girl, and, after all, the cross would be safer on her neck than on Marta's when the dancing started. So she hung the tiny cross on her little sister's neck, with many warnings to be careful of it.

Angelita, proud as a peacock, found her way to the neighborhood of the gramophone, and sat there very quietly for awhile, listening to the music.

At last, as a concluding piece, the teacher put on the record of the Mexican national hymn—a really magnificent piece of music, stirring the blood of everyone who heard it. This record had just come from Mexico City a few days before,and it surprised the whole company into handclapping. Angelita jumped up, much excited, and joined in the final chorus, which everybody sang lustily.

After this the local musicians came, with harp and guitar, and the dancing began. The teacher and the gramophone departed, and the fun grew rather noisy. In the midst of it Donna Petra came flying up, demanding, "Angelita, where is my cross? Marta said she gave it to you to keep for her."

Angelita's little brown hand went up to her neck, but the cross was gone.

In a few moments the happy scene was changed. The dancing stopped, and everybody began to hunt for the pearl cross; but it seemed to have disappeared entirely.

An hour later a sobbing and exhausted little girl ran into the arms of the school-teacher, hastening along the road. Angelita was praying aloud: "O San Antonio! Blessed San Antonio! Help me to find the pearl cross! It is all my fault; I was vain and careless! Oh, help me to find it!"

"Stop, Angelita!" exclaimed Miss Miller, catching her by the arm. "Here is a little pearl cross. Can you tell me whose it is?"

"Where did you find it?" she gasped.

"In the horn of the gramophone, when I was packing it away!" said Miss Miller. "Now tell me why you have been crying so."

"It is all right now," said the radiant Angelita. "I

was crying because the cross was lost, and praying the good San Antonio to help me find it. Did he send you with it, Miss Miller?"

"A greater and a better Friend of yours than San Antonio sent me to you, dear," said the lady. "Come, we will go together and take the cross to poor Marta; and I will tell you about the Friend who finds what is lost."

It was an old story that the teacher told, walking along the road with the little girl's hand in hers, but it was all new to Angelita. It was the story of the Shepherd who sought the lost sheep until He found it. As the story ended and they drew near the house Angelita said shyly, "May I come to the Sunday school and hear more about the kind Friend? I would like to tell my mother and Marta and Miguel and Donna Petra about Him. May I come next Sunday?"

And the teacher, rejoicing in her heart, replied, "Indeed, you may!"

THE GOOD WHITE MAN

Through the early morning freshness of tropical Africa, an ox-cart went lumbering heavily along. Two white men sat upon it, and a number of blacks walked beside it, prodding the oxen or carrying bundles on their heads.

One of the white men, a young Scotchman, with plain, strongly-marked features, sat reading in a small book as the cart jogged on. The other chatted with the men by the side of the cart, and presently turned to his companion, saying, "We would better stop. Pomare says someone is coming after us from the village and beckoning us to wait."

When the face of the reader was lifted, an onlooker would have forgotten its plainness in the sweetness of the smile which illumined it.

"After us?" said he. "I hope they do not want us to go back, for we have made ten or twelve miles, and it would be a great loss of time to return. I am anxious now to be in Kuruman."

"It is a present from the chief," explained the native called Pomare. "He is very much pleased because the white doctor has helped his sore eyes. They feel much better this morning, and he sends a fine buck for a gift."

"Truly," said the doctor, "that will be a welcome present. That rhinoceros flesh we have been living on is toughness itself, though the gravy is not bad with our porridge of cornmeal. Come, I will go myself to meet the messengers, and tell them to bear our thanks to the chief."

Descending from the cart, the missionary made known the thanks of the party through an interpreter, and arranged for the loading of the buck meat on the cart and on the heads of the men who were without burdens. This done, he was about to remount the cart, when Pomare exclaimed, "Look what is under the cart!"

The doctor bent to look. Sure enough, there was a little black girl, perhaps eleven years old, sitting under the cart, as much at home as if she were sitting in the doorway of her father's hut.

"Who is she, Pomare, and how did she come here?" asked the missionary.

Pomare began to question the little girl.

"She has no parents," he presently told the doctor. "She lived with her sister, who has lately died. Some neighbors took her in; but she found out that they had done it so that they could sell her to some rich man for a wife. See how she is dressed up with strings of beads, so that she will fetch a higher price!"

"Sold!" said the doctor. "And how comes she here?"

"She saw us in the village," said Pomare, "and she says, 'The white doctor looked good and kind, and I knew he would help me. So I ran away and followed his wagon, and I want you to let me walk behind it till you get to Kuruman.' She says she has friends there."

"Walk all that way!" exclaimed the white doctor. "How can she do it? We must take her on the cart."

"No, no!" said Pomare. "If she were seen riding with you it would be said that you had stolen her. Let her follow if she will," he added pityingly.

"Let us go slowly, then, and rest often," said the tender-hearted missionary. "She must be hungry."

And with his own hands he gave her some of the food prepared for his lunch.

Hardly had he returned to his book when a sound of bitter sobbing made him lay it down again and leap quickly from the cart.

"What is the child crying about?" he asked anxiously.

"See," said Pomare, pointing back, "a man with a gun is coming; no doubt he has been sent to take her back."

"What can I do?" asked the doctor in distress. "I cannot refuse to give her up and make that whole village, that has treated us so kindly, think me a kidnapper. But how can I send the poor child back to a life of slavery?"

"Let me manage it," said Pomare. "My father is a chief, and they know I have some authority and will listen to me."

The man with the gun was very angry. He came up to the cart, pointed at the little girl and jabbered away in what sounded like very bad language, though the white men could not understand it. Pomare stood calmly till he was done, and then commenced to speak.

Suddenly the child began to strip off the beads with which she was loaded, holding them up by handfuls and offering them to the man.

He chattered a little more, but not so angrily. Finally he took the beads and turned away, while the little girl crept trembling under the cart again.

"She has given all her beads if they will only let her go free," said Pomare. "He has taken them, but he cannot say whether that will satisfy his masters or not. They will likely send for her again."

"They shall not get her!" declared the doctor with decision. "Not if they send fifty men after her! Come, hasten! I will find means to hide her, and, afterwards, we will plan some way to get her to Kuruman. She deserves to be free."

And so she was, after many narrow escapes—the little girl who trusted the kind face of the good white man. She made no mistake when she said he would help her; for the white doctor was David Livingstone, who did more to set the sons and daughters of Africa free than any other man that ever lived.

MAMMY LOU'S MEDICINE

" 'Deed, Sis' Lou, dem chillens has me mos' wild!" declared the portly colored matron of the Girl's School, wiping the beads of sweat from her gleaming black forehead.

"What's the matter, Aunty 'Ria?" inquired the white teacher, who was "holding the fort" with one assistant and the matron, at this lone post on the western coast of Africa.

"Dunno, Sis' Lou," sighed the matron. "It look to me like de bad sperits is in dem. First dey fight, jes' over nothin' at all. Den dey call each other liars, an' t'iefs, an' all sorts of names; an' dey swears—oh, my sakes, Sis' Lou, how dey swears!"

"Poor little girls!" said Miss Lou. "They don't know any better, Aunty 'Ria; you know, they hear such dreadful language at home, back in the bush, before we get them here."

"Yessum, I knows," said Aunty 'Ria indignantly. "Dese African niggers is sho' good for nothin'. I ain't been used to such carryin's on, with debbil dances an' all dose affairs. You know, Sis' Lou," she said proudly, "I'se from de United States; I'se none o' dese low-down bush niggers. Dat's what I always tells de girls, when dey makes such a fuss over deir ol' Liberian flag, with one star on it. 'Go 'way,' I says, 'you only got one star on your flag. I'se American, an' my flag done got plenty stars on it.' "

"Well, well, Aunty 'Ria," said Miss Lou, rising, "I'll see what I can do with the girls. You can point out the ringleaders to me, and I'll make an example of them."

"It don't do no good to whip 'em," protested the matron. "Dey gets whipped so much at home deir hides is jes' naturally tanned before we gets 'em. Whippin' ain't nothin' to dem!"

"I'm going to do worse than whip them," declared Miss Lou, the corners of her mouth growing firm as a sound of blows and a cry of pain floated in to her. And she went out hastily, Aunty 'Ria following her in awed delight. "Sis' Lou" was a big woman—almost six feet tall, and strong as a man. If she took matters in hand, things would happen!

There was neither strap nor stick in Miss Lou's hand when she reached the girls; only a basin of water, some rags and a cake of palm-oil soap.

"Girls," she said very gravely, "I've been hearing some very bad talk coming out of your mouths."

" 'Twasn't me, Mammy Lou," they began to clamor, " 'twas her—an' her—an'——"

"That will do," said the teacher, sterner than ever. "Sarah and Lucy and Annabel, you may come here."

Silence fell on the noisy mob of schoolgirls. Mammy Lou, with her wonderful knowledge of everything they did, had picked out the very girls who had started the "bad words."

"When such words come out of a girl's mouth," said Miss Lou, graver than ever, "I think she must be very bad indeed on the inside of the mouth, don't you?"

"Yes'm, yes'm!" assented all the girls but the three culprits.

"When you have a breaking out on your body," went on the teacher, "we give you medicine to drive the bad blood out. You know that, don't you?"

The girls agreed in deeper awe than ever.

"Well, I'm going to use some medicine to drive the bad words out of your mouth; and I'm going to begin on

these three girls," declared Mammy Lou, advancing toward Annabel.

Now, it isn't nice at any time to have your mouth washed out with soap, even when the soap is mild and scented. But when it is palm-oil soap, with its taste of the most aged kind of rancid butter, all joy in the performance is decidedly lacking.

Whipping, as Aunty 'Ria had said, was a commonplace thing to these wild girls from the bush. They would have whimpered awhile if Mammy Lou had thrashed them, and would straightway have forgotten it. But such "medicine" as this had never been known before.

Down on the ground Annabel threw herself and began to scream as if she were being murdered. The taste of the soap was worse every time she closed her mouth, so she presently decided not to close it at all.

"Ah-h-h, poor me!" she wailed. "Got no mammy, got no daddy! O daddy, come an' get your chile! You often flog me, but you never did me so-o-o!"

Sarah and Lucy quickly imitated her, and the rest of the girls joined in from sympathy. Miss Lou put her fingers in her ears and fled, overwhelmed at the success of her punishment.

Now across the river were the buildings of the Boys' School, and there lived Mr. Walker, the superintendent of the Mission. On that still evening, sound carried clearly over the water; and when the noise of the screams and wailing floated across the river Mr. Walker was alarmed.

He could think of no cause for such an uproar, unless the whole population of the Girls' School had been taken with cholera, or bitten by a snake or attacked by a leopard; so he stuffed all the pockets of his long ulster with all the medicine bottles he could carry, and told two of the boys to get out a canoe and row him quickly over the river.

This was not an easy matter, for the river was full of rapids; so dusk was falling when the superintendent mounted the hill to the Girls' School.

The girls had grown tired of rolling on the ground and screaming, and were lying there in sullen silence, waiting to be called in to bed. The darkness and silence frightened the superintendent still more. Surely everybody must be dead, or it would not be so quiet!

At the sound of his footsteps and the flashing of his lantern the girls sat up. He lifted the lantern high and surveyed the sheepish-looking crowd of children with great relief.

"Well, now, girls," he began, in his deliberate way, "what was the noise about?"

The girls nudged Annabel, and she said sulkily, "Mammy Lou gave us some medicine."

"And I can give you some more, if it's necessary; remember that, girls!" said the superintendent, patting his jingling pockets suggestively. Then he passed indoors, to get the full account from Miss Lou, with delighted comments from Aunty 'Ria.

Nothing was said after that about palm-oil medicine, nor were "bad words" in evidence for a long time. But all next day, as Miss Lou sat writing in her room or hearing the little ones recite their lessons, there would be frequent interruptions, very much alike.

A curly, black head would appear stealthily around the door, bare feet would steal across the creaking boards, and a dark little hand would lay penitently on the desk a peace-offering—a bird's nest, a pretty pebble, or a bunch of wild flowers. The girls were trying to tell Mammy Lou that they were sorry and ashamed, and would do their best never to need any more of her "medicine."

THE CHILDREN'S EMPEROR

"Where have you been, dear?" asked mother as Edith came in very quietly, with eyes that looked suspiciously moist.

"Just up the alley to ask how Miss Fannie is," said Edith. "Her sister said she is just about the same."

Mother's face was very full of sympathy as she put her arm around the little girl. Miss Fannie was the beloved teacher of the first primary, and she had been very sick for the last two weeks.

Miss Fannie's sister, Ruth, had told Edith's mother about the sad little procession that filed up the alley to the back door every day after school was out.

"And it doesn't make much difference what time I go to the door from four o'clock on till dark, there's almost sure to be a little face looking through the fence, and a little voice asking 'How's Miss Fannie?' " added Ruth.

"It's dreadful in school!" declared Edith. "The substitute's pretty nice, but she doesn't know Miss Fannie's ways. You know, mother. Miss Fannie just made us *want* to do things! Every time I look at her desk a lump comes in my throat; and every time I go up the alley to her house I'm afraid to ask, for fear she's worse! All the children are just the same."

"You remind me of something I have just been reading about the Emperor of Japan," said her mother, taking up a magazine that lay on the table. "When he was sick the school children used to come by hundreds to learn how he was, just as you all go streaming up the alley.

"Sometimes they went together, sometimes alone, but there were always little folks waiting to hear the latest

reports. The guards often saw them bowing toward the palace, or prostrating themselves on the gravel to pray that the Emperor's life might be spared."

"Why did they care for him so much?" asked Edith. "He wasn't their teacher, like Miss Fannie."

"He was very fond of children," said mother. "Everybody in Japan loved and prayed for the Emperor, for he was a kind and good ruler; but the children loved him most of all, because he loved them so well.

"Whenever the Emperor traveled about through the country, wherever his train stopped, the school children were always lined up at the station to see him. It was the proper thing to do when the Emperor passed by, so the teachers used to bring them all out, no matter what the weather was, and there they would stand till the train had gone again.

"Japanese children are taught that to do honor to the Emperor is the greatest thing in life; besides, they are taught to bear all kinds of discomfort and never to complain. So they would stand there like statues, rain or shine, as long as the Emperor was in sight.

"One day it was very cold; the snow was falling and the wind blowing, and the children were standing out in the open, with nothing to protect them from the storm. The Emperor saw them stand there, and he was very angry. His court officials said they had never seen him so much vexed.

" 'Let this never happen to my children again!' he said.

"And after that no child ever went out to meet the Emperor without having an umbrella strapped to its back, with the lunch basket, in case of storm."

"No wonder they loved him!" said Edith. "And they prayed for him to get well? Do you think it would be a good thing for us to do, mother? I'd kind of hate to

kneel down in the alley, but I don't want those Japanese children to care more than we do."

"I think you can pray for Miss Fannie just as well at home, dear," said mother, trying not to smile.

"Did the Emperor get well, after they prayed for him?" asked Edith suddenly. Mother was serious enough now, and hesitated before she replied.

"No, dear, he didn't. Last year it was said that about thirty thousand school children went every week to see the beautiful green hill where he sleeps among the bamboo trees."

"Oh, well," said Edith hopefully, "they had only old heathen idols to pray to. I'm going to tell all the boys and girls about the Emperor and the children, and I guess Miss Fannie will like to hear about them, too—after she gets well!"

ON THE OUTSIDE OF CHRISTMAS

"Grandmother," asked Juana, "why do the American children go every day to the hall and sing?"

"I do not know, my child," said old Carmela. "It matters not to me. Since the Americans came to Panama all things are upside down. Your Uncle José was here this morning, and he said that where he lives there will soon be no village any more."

"Why not?" asked curious Juana. "And where will he live then?"

"Where will he live?" repeated the grandmother, pushing the long gray hair from her dim old eyes. "How do I know? He will have to find another place to live, he and his wife Marie, and all the little ones. Why? Because the Americans are making their big ditch"—Carmela meant the Panama Canal, of course—"right over the place where the village was. When the water is turned in, all that country will be in the big lake they are making."

"How queer!" said Juana. "I wish I could see the great waters come in, all over the land. And when the big ships come through it will be still more wonderful. What was it like, grandmother, before the Americans came here?"

"Not like this," said Carmela with a sigh. "It was quiet, and people could live where they pleased, and food was plenty; there were no great wagons without horses rushing around to knock one down; it was dark and still at night, and one could sleep better."

"But there was not so much to see," said Juana, who could barely remember the time when the Canal Zone was not full of American ladies and children, in their pretty clothes, and workmen of all nations, speaking every known language.

"Yes, you are always for seeing!" grumbled Carmela, pouring a handful of corn on the flat stone before her, and taking up the smaller stone with which she ground the corn by rolling the stone over it. "There is too much hard work in the world for people always to be running to see something! If you want to know why the children go to the hall, why don't you go and see?"

"I will," said Juana. "Come, Pedro, we will go and find out what they are doing."

Up to the clubhouse the two children went. Sounds of music were swelling out from the large room where the American children had assembled. Juana and Pedro dared not enter, but they hung on the railing of the veranda, peering eagerly through the windows.

The songs were very beautiful, and some of the children wore gay costumes. A Christmas cantata was in prospect, and every day for several weeks the children had come after school to practice; but today was the first dress rehearsal.

"Get out of here, you kids!" spoke a rough voice, and a big boy with an air of importance shoved Pedro roughly from the railing. "You're not in this! What do you know about Christmas? Get out, I say!"

Juana and her little brother sadly withdrew, casting many longing glances back at the clubhouse.

"I didn't ask to be in it," Juana said hotly. "I only wanted to see. Christmas must be a fine thing, even to be on the outside of. I do know about Christmas. It comes every year, and they have gifts on that day; but they never made so great a Christmas as this."

It was true that this celebration was to surpass all that had ever been held in that part of Panama. There was a larger American community there now than there had ever been before; a young teacher had come there who knew how to train children for a larger program than

they had yet attempted; and the Americans felt unusually like celebrating, for this was the last Christmas many of them expected to spend in the Canal Zone. Next year the canal would be finished, and they were going "home."

Every day Juana watched the children go by, but never again did she try to follow them.

"Why are we 'not in' Christmas?" she said to her grandmother.

"Only the rich American children are in that kind of Christmas," said Carmela. "Poor children, like you and Pedro, must stay on the outside."

On Christmas eve Juana's heart almost burst with envy as she saw the children go by with their parents, all laughing and excited.

"Come, Pedro," she said, "I am going to put on the old white dress of Annie's that Doña Harris gave me when I took her washing home. I will wash your face; and maybe we can get near enough to see what the inside of Christmas is like."

The approaches to the hall were crowded, and the children could not get near. But on one side of the veranda stood a small but stout young tree.

"Up, Pedro!" said Juana. "It is almost dark, and they will not see us. We can look right in the window and see it all."

What a wonderful evening it was! A Christmas tree—not a pine, but a more tropical kind—was placed at the head of the hall, glittering with stars and angels. Pedro and Juana had never seen anything like it. The beautifully dressed children did their parts with an ease that seemed little short of a miracle to the bashful little Panamans.

But the best part of all was when all the children joined in singing the old carol, "O Santissimo." The children in the tree could catch the words of this better, because it

was in Spanish; and the tune was familiar to their ears. They had hard work to keep from joining; but now they saw a sight that made them hold their breath.

Instead of receiving gifts, the long line of children was marching forward, bringing presents of all sorts to the platform. Food, clothing, toys, all sorts of things were heaped up there; but the boy and girl in the tree, strain their eyes as they might, could not see who received them.

Soon the exercises were over, and they went away, much puzzled over their first glimpse of a "giving Christmas."

"Do you suppose they are for little Jesus, for His birthday, that they sang about?" asked Juana. But Pedro could not answer.

On Christmas morning, bright and early, came visitors to old Carmela's door. Bright-faced Annie Harris, and two of her little friends, had brought a big basket.

There were groceries, a new scarf for Carmela, a ribbon for Juana, a gay necktie for Pedro, and several toys for both children.

"It is your part from the Christmas tree," explained Annie in her best Spanish. "We wanted everybody to be happy with us this Christmas, and so we have presents for all; we wish you a merry Christmas, all of us!"

"I thought your Christmas was only for Americans," said Juana, hugging the first real doll she had ever had. "I looked in the window and saw the heaps of things, and I thought maybe they were for the baby Jesus—the one you sang about," she added.

Annie put her arm around Juana.

"So they were," she said, "but He told us to give them to you for Him, because that would please Him best."

"He is very good," said Juana, her small dark face in a glow. "I could love that little Jesus! Oh, but it is a beautiful thing to be on the inside of Christmas!"

"JUST LIKE A MISSIONARY"

The new missionary's wife stood in the open gateway of the Mission compound, looking eagerly out. She was just twenty, just arrived in China, and intensely interested in all the sights and sounds of the seaport city.

The older missionary's wife joined her at the gate, putting a protecting arm about the slender form. She felt a secret pity for the girl-wife, who was going in a few days with her husband, nearly as new to China and almost as young as she, up into the interior to establish a new Mission station.

"Here comes such a quaint old woman!" exclaimed Mrs. Lambert—for that was the girl-missionary's new name. "She walks so slowly, but she looks around so brightly and speaks to everybody she meets."

"That is Grandmother Ling," replied Mrs. Harmon. "It will take her some minutes to get up the hill, and meantime I can tell you her story, for I feel quite sure she is coming to see you, and I want you to know about her before you meet her.

"Twenty years ago, when we first came here to live, she was a strong and active woman. She had been a widow for some years, without any living children, and we were told she would be a good servant for us to engage.

"So she came to work for us. The very first thing she did was to set up an image of a Chinese god in the most conspicuous place in our kitchen. Morning, noon and night she was bowing in front of him, and every day she offered him choice bits of the food she prepared for us.

"I didn't care for the little portions of chicken and rice the idol received, but I did feel as though I ought to tell her that idols could not be worshiped in a missionary's kitchen. But my husband said, 'She is not a young woman, and she is very determined. She will only leave us in anger if you forbid her to worship her god. Let her alone, and try to show her that you care nothing for her idol, but you are a friend to her.'

"I took his advice, and the bowing and offering of incense went on, much to my distaste. But one day, after some months had passed, Mrs. Ling came to me with the image in her hands.

" 'All these days,' she said, 'I have worshiped my god in your house. I thought if I were faithful to him you might learn to worship him too. But many days have passed, and you do not worship my god. He does not listen to me when I pray to him, for I asked him to make you learn to worship him. Now I bring him to you, for I do not want him any more. I want to learn to worship your God instead.'

"She became one of my husband's most earnest pupils, sitting with the children to learn to read the Bible. Now she is one of our most faithful Bible women, and still goes about doing much good, though she is almost seventy."

Grandmother Ling had reached the top of the hill by this time. She was rather breathless, but beaming with smiles as she asked to see the "new missionary people." The two ladies conducted her with ceremony into the mission house, where their husbands were sitting in close conference over the plans for the new mission station.

"You are going up the river to start a new preaching place?" inquired Grandmother Ling, after she had been duly presented to the strangers.

"Yes, we are," assented Mr. Lambert.

"It is a long, long way you are going," she went on.

"Yes."

"And it will be hard work?"

"I suppose it will."

"You both look very young," was her next remark.

The boyish-looking missionary glanced at his young wife with a smile. "Yes, grandmother, I'm afraid we do."

"And you must be very inexperienced."

"Yes, we are very green," he admitted laughingly.

A pause ensued. Then Grandmother Ling startled them all by saying, "Well, I am going with you."

"Going with us? Oh, we couldn't ask that of you," faltered the bride.

"Why, grandmother," put in Mr. Harmon, "how could you undertake such a journey? You are getting old, and you have your comfortable little home, and your friends and your work here. Surely you do not dream of starting out, at your age, among strangers."

Grandmother Ling stood her ground meekly but decisively.

"All these years since I have been a Christian," she said, "I have wished it had pleased the Lord to let me be a foreign missionary. I go about here and tell people of the Gospel; but you have a greater honor, for you have been called to leave your homes and your people and go among strangers to tell about Jesus. I know I am an old woman, but I know China as these young people do not, and I am sure I can help them to start their new work. I will be no burden; I will carry all I need for the journey, and I will provide my own food. But this is my chance to be just a little like a foreign missionary. Do not deny me the blessing God has given to you."

There was no more to be said. The missionaries consented with misgivings. On the day when their boat was to sail Grandmother Ling appeared, bag and baggage. Her

entire outfit consisted of a sleeping-mat, slung and fastened across her shoulders, a three-legged stool, a tea-kettle, and an expression of serene content.

"I am ready to start," said she.

The journey was long and tedious, and when the young missionary and his wife arrived at the place where the new Mission was to be established they found that its beginnings would have to be very simple. There was no church building; for the present the services must be held in the open air; but as a congregation gathered, and as cold weather drew near, a rude hut was built which served at least as a shelter.

A dwelling place for the missionaries was scarcely less of a problem. There was a house, to be sure, and there was a stove and some other furniture, brought up the river with them on the boat. But, alas! the stovepipe they had brought proved too short to reach into the chimney.

"I've been all over this town"—declared Mr. Lambert, coming in weary and ruffled in spirit—"all over this town of eleven thousand people, and in all the place there are not four feet of stovepipe, nor a piece of sheet tin big enough to roll up and make one out of. That is China for you!"

"Well," said his wife, emerging dusty but triumphant from the depths of a packing box, "now I have everything out of these big boxes at last. The best we can do is just to set the stove up on top of these empty boxes, and then the pipe will reach."

"But," objected her husband, "then the stove will be so far from the floor that our feet will always be cold."

"Then we will put our chairs up on top of the dining table and sit there," calmly declared Mrs. Lambert. And that was what they actually did when the cold weather came, and thus received hosts of admiring visitors desiring to know if that was the way people lived in America.

While these household problems were taking much of their time, Grandmother Ling had established herself in a little shed, and was perfectly at home with everybody. It mattered little to her whether she had furniture or not; she was too busy preparing the way for the missionary while yet the weather was mild enough for her to find people out at their work. All through the autumn she was trotting about with her three-legged stool and her teakettle.

Down along the river she would find a woman busy washing. With a friendly greeting she would pause. Down on its three legs came the stool, and then grandmother perched herself upon it and proceeded to interview the woman.

"It's a cold day, sister," she remarked, beginning to start a tiny fire under her tea-kettle.

"Yes, the water is cold, and I am chilled through," sighed the woman, straightening her tired back.

"Then a cup of tea will refresh you," said Grandmother Ling; and in a few minutes she would hand a steaming drink to the grateful toiler.

"It is hard work to get the clothes clean," she remarked pensively while the tea disappeared.

"Yes, indeed," said the woman. "I rub and pound, and yet I can scarcely get the dirt out."

"Did you know," asked grandmother persuasively, "that your heart needs washing much more than your clothes do?"

"My heart?" exclaimed the woman, startled. "Oh, no, my heart is not dirty like the clothes!"

"Yes, it is," insisted the old lady. "If you think of all you have done and said, even today, you will see how many spots there are on it. But there is Somebody who can wash them all out, and make your heart whiter than the clean clothes."

And so she told the wondering woman of the cleansing there is in Jesus Christ.

Another time it would be in a garden where a woman was weeding.

"Your heart," grandmother informed her, after the preliminaries with the stool and the teakettle, "is full of weeds. But there is One who can pull them out and make only good things grow there."

So, taking the homely work of every day for her text, Grandmother Ling went preaching her little sermons all about the town. And the people, warmed by her tea and heartened by her friendliness, listened, at first doubtfully, then with nodding heads, and finally would say, "Yes, we will come to hear your missionary tell more about the Jesus doctrine."

And so the new Church was filled with eager listeners; but it was not the preacher's eloquence that brought them there, but the homely preaching of Grandmother Ling.

The weather grew colder and colder, but the old woman would not cease her efforts, though the missionaries often urged her to rest. At last, one day, the deadly pneumonia, brought on by exposure, seized her feeble old lungs, and grandmother could speak no more to her little flock of listeners.

The missionary had medical training, and as he listened to the old woman's labored breathing his face grew very grave.

"Shall I be better soon?" she whispered, as he stood beside her.

"Grandmother," he said tenderly, "I have to tell you something that is very hard for me to say. I have let you leave your home and friends and come here among strangers to help me; and a wonderful help you have been! But you have worked so hard that your strength is all gone;

and now you can never go home again to your little house or see your friends any more on earth."

"Do you mean," said she, with sparkling eyes, "that I am going to die here, away from home?"

"Yes, grandmother, I am afraid you are," he said sorrowfully.

"But, oh, what happiness!" whispered the old woman, her face aglow. "I always wanted to be a foreign missionary, and now the dear Lord is going to let me lay down my life for Him here, away from home, just as the missionaries do. To think He would honor me so!"

Grandmother Ling sleeps in a strange town, away from the graves of all her ancestors. But many people bless her memory, and are very sure that she was really and truly "just like a missionary."

THE CASTE OF SEETAMMA

"Is John coming this evening?" inquired Seetamma, shyly hanging back as the other little girls filed out of school.

Deena, the young Christian woman who taught in the Mission school for high caste girls in Mangalagiri, looked questioningly at Seetamma's sweet, earnest face. The little girl was about fourteen; she had worn for many years the one coarse garment of a widow. Beside the smooth cheeks no jewels ever dangled, and on the slender arms no bracelets ever shone. Yet the charm and grace of the child were such that no one missed the jewels who looked at her bright eyes and sparkling smile.

"You are fond of my brother-in-law, are you not, Seetamma?" asked Deena.

"Oh, yes," replied Seetamma, glowing with earnestness. "At first, you know, I thought he was beneath me, because I was a Brahman and he an outcaste—pardon me, dear Deena!" she added quickly, remembering that her beloved teacher, as well as Deena's husband, Joshua, was also of the outcaste people. "But then I found out how much more he knew than I did; and then he was so very kind to me—and you know, at home nobody is good to me, because I am a widow."

A shadow fell across the radiant face, but only for a moment. When she was in the school among the other girls, Seetamma often forgot the drudgery that awaited her when she went home. Her husband had died long ago, before she could remember him, and the child-widow had from that time been a drudge and slave in the house of her mother-in-law.

"You knew that made no difference to us, Seetamma dear," said Deena gently.

"Yes, I found that out, and wondered at it greatly," said Seetamma. "It was only when I learned to know that it was because you and your husband and his brother were Christians that I could understand it. Ah, there is John!" she cried out suddenly as a shadow fell across the veranda. John was approaching rapidly.

Seetamma would have dashed out to meet him, but Deena laid a restraining hand on her shoulder.

"Softly, Seetamma! Remember you are growing up and must learn to be a woman. Come, we will go out together to meet John."

On the following Sabbath, which John spent at the home of his brother Joshua and sister-in-law Deena, Seetamma also was there for a time, a happy little guest. The Christian high-school boy had for the last two years been an object of vast admiration to the little Brahman widow, and she always sought permission to be in Deena's home at the time of his visits. Indeed, at other times as well she spent every hour there which she could snatch from her drudgery, for Deena had become like an elder sister to her.

"I have been telling Seetamma," said John to Deena that Sunday evening, "that it would be a fine thing for her if she would come to Guntur and study in the Stall School for Girls. She is bright and eager to learn, and even if she does not become a Christian, she could be prepared for teaching, and get away from the dreary life she leads."

"Be careful, John!" warned his sister-in-law. "Seetamma's people are Brahmans, and I often wonder that she is allowed to come here as she does. If they were to accuse us of tempting her away from them, Joshua and I might not be able to stay in Mangalagiri. Certainly I could not

go on teaching in the Girls' School, for other high-caste parents would be afraid to send their daughters there."

"I do not think Seetamma will be long contented where she is, whether we say anything to her or not," replied John. "She is too full of life and energy, and will break away sooner or later. I am only trying to guide her into a safe path when she does make up her mind to go."

* * * *

"Open the gate! Take us to the doctor-lady! Seetamma is here! We want to get Seetamma! What have you done with her? Where is she?"

The little knot of excited Hindus pressed about the hospital gate in loud excitement. The attendant hastened to call the "doctor-lady."

Doctor Kugler came out serenely to face the noisy group, as calm as though she were welcoming them to an afternoon tea.

"Yes," she replied to their insistent demands, "a little girl is here who says her name is Seetamma, and she came from Mangalagiri to study in our school and learn to be a teacher."

"She is defiled! You have bewitched her!" shouted the angry relatives. "You dare not keep her! She has run away, and must go back with us to her mother-in-law and be well whipped for her disobedience."

A little spark of fire gleamed in the doctor-lady's calm eyes.

"She is not defiled, as you say," she answered. "I have kept her from doing anything that would break her caste; she has not eaten or slept with any of another caste, nor taken food prepared in their way. You must know we do not accept every runaway girl who comes to us, and make her a teacher. Oh, no! We must have only the best for that. So I have kept her caste unbroken for fear after all she might change her mind and then you would

not take her back. I shall certainly not keep her unless I find she is really in earnest and worthy to be one of our teachers."

The lofty tone of the doctor-lady was so different from what they expected that the noisy relatives stood staring. Seetamma perhaps not worthy to be a teacher? And she might be sent back to them as not fit to be kept at school? That was a new idea.

Then the attendant, to whom Doctor Kugler had whispered an order, came bringing the little Brahman widow to the gate. At sight of her the noise arose again.

"Wicked girl, to run away! Would you come to the Christian school and break your caste? We will all go and drown ourselves in the well if you do such a thing! Come, you are going back with us at once!"

Seetamma stood calmly till the noise subsided. She never took her anxious eyes from the face of the doctor-lady.

"Seetamma," said Doctor Kugler, very quietly, "are you ready to go back with your people? And will you tell them that you have not broken caste?"

"Doctor-lady," said Seetamma, still never glancing toward her clamorous kinsfolk, "I came here to be a teacher. My caste has brought me no joy, and though it is not yet broken, I care not how soon it is. Will you send me back to be beaten by my mother-in-law?"

"You are quite decided, Seetamma, that you will be a teacher?" insisted the doctor. "It is a long, tedious course of study, and it is not play to teach a village school. Besides, your people will cast you out if you stay."

"I will stay!" declared Seetamma, with such decision in her voice that there was hardly a murmur from the relatives when Doctor Kugler called the attendant to shut the gate.

Six years have passed, and the home of the Reverend and Mrs. McCauley is lighted up for their regular Friday evening "at home" to their friends, both Indian and American.

Into the midst of the little social group come a young man and woman, evidently bride and groom.

"It is John and Seetamma," exclaims Mrs. McCauley "What a fine couple they make, and how happy they look!"

"Yes," admitted John later in the evening, in a quiet chat with his hostess, "no girl was ever so charming to me as Seetamma, even when she was but twelve years old and wrapped in her widow's garb. I went away, you know, to college, after she came to Guntur to school; but all the time I kept thinking of her, and what a splendid woman she would make. Then I came back, and she was not a little girl any more, but a lovely woman of twenty. I wished, oh, so much, to have her for my wife, but she was a Brahman and I an outcaste! How could I ask for her?"

"Just as if it had not been he," put in Seetamma, "who taught me that we are all the same in God's sight! After I was baptized I knew no caste any more. And John was always wiser and better than I; and it was he who taught me what a Christian is; so I think he belongs to the only real caste there is—the caste we both belong to."

"And that?" questioned the missionary softly.

"The caste," said Seetamma, "of the children of God."

And down the lighted path they went together, showered by good wishes from all the guests; not with John walking ahead and Seetamma behind, as they would have done if they had been a Hindu couple, but side by side, with fingers interlocked, like a pair of happy children. And the doctor-lady looked after them with a smile.

A PIE FOR MISS HELEN

John Little Crow and Thomas Blue Dog were alone in the big bakery of the Indian school. It was five years since they had been taken from the wretched huts on the reservation where their families lived, and brought to this great building to live.

At first they had thought it was "big medicine" when a button was pushed and dozens of twinkling lights appeared; or when the great machines in the laundry swallowed bushels of soiled clothes and turned them out again spotlessly clean.

But the thing they liked best was the bakery, which always smelled so good; it was such fun to help push the white loaves into the big oven and take them out again, large and fragrant and brown.

They had wanted to learn the baker's trade; and now they had become such good helpers to Mr. Darrow, the head baker, that he often left them alone to take out a baking, or even to mix up a batch themselves.

Today he had been gone an unusually long while. The last of the bread was out, and they had no orders to bake anything else; but the oven was still hot and they were waiting to see if he would have anything more for them to do.

"I like Miss Helen," John confided presently to Thomas Blue Dog. "She smiles so pleasant! It is good of her that she comes all this long way from her home to teach us."

Miss Helen was the newest teacher, and very popular in the school.

"Why do we not make her a present?" said Thomas, fingering a big rolling-pin.

"A present?" asked John Little Crow.

"Big chiefs," said Thomas, "always give presents to people they like—to all their friends. My grandfather went once to a great potlatch (feast), and there the chief gave many hundreds of blankets and a whole herd of ponies to the people who came."

"But we have no blankets or ponies," objected John.

"Foolish boy!" said Thomas. "Miss Helen does not want blankets, and perhaps she would be afraid to ride on a pony. But she likes pie!"

"Pie?" said John in amazement.

"A little pie," repeated Thomas; "a cherry pie, all for herself. Look!" and he opened a closet door and showed the wondering John a plate on which lay several handfuls of cherries.

"I helped to pick some this morning," he said, "and Mr. Brown gave me these for myself. I thought I would save them; and now, if you will help, we can make Miss Helen a pie."

"Good!" said John. "We will begin now."

"Get the flour," commanded Thomas. "Measure out ——"

"How much?" asked John, waiting with scoop in hand.

"Wait till I think," said the puzzled Thomas. "We make a hundred and seventy-five pies for the whole school; and we use——"

Out came pencil and paper, and Thomas was soon deep in calculations. John had no paper, but he began to figure industriously on the under side of the table.

"And lard," said Thomas. John's pencil set down likewise the number of pounds of lard required for a baking of pies for the whole school, and then began to divide by a hundred and seventy-five. They knew how to bake for a great many people, but neither of them knew how to make one pie.

"I have so much," at last said Thomas, and proceeded to read the quantities he had figured out.

"That is wrong," declared John. "I have it this way; and you know I was always better at arithmetic than you."

"I don't care," said Thomas, "I was the one that thought of making the pie."

"I'm not going to let Miss Helen get any pie that isn't made right," asserted John vigorously.

About five minutes later Mr. Darrow walked in, to find his two assistants locked in battle on the floor.

"Boys! boys! What in the world does this mean?" exclaimed the good-natured baker. "John! Thomas! What do you think you are doing?"

Two shame-faced Indian boys disentangled themselves and rose from the floor.

"We're making a pie for Miss Helen!" explained Thomas sheepishly.

The baker's laugh rang out so loudly that the boys at play outside came peeping in to see what was the matter. The story soon spread, and by evening Miss Helen was receiving amused condolence from the other teachers over her failure to get a pie.

For some days Thomas and John went about looking very foolish. The other boys teased them unmercifully, and even the girls would laugh when they saw them, and make believe to be pinching the edges of a pie.

Mr. Darrow found them so depressed that the work began to suffer. One day he slyly remarked, "This measure holds just enough flour for one pie."

He saw Thomas glance sideways at the measure, and knew he had not spoken in vain. Thomas would remember that measure.

Another tree of cherries was ready for picking in a few days. These were to be preserved, and all the girls who

were not busy at other tasks gathered in the dining room that afternoon, with several of the teachers to oversee, and proceeded to stone cherries.

Thomas Blue Dog and John Little Crow seemed to have a great many errands to the store-room that afternoon, and every trip required them to pass through the dining room. Miss Helen noticed that as they passed each time they managed to take a few cherries from one of the baskets; but there was no rule against their helping themselves to some fruit, and all the children were wild to taste it, so she said nothing.

The cherry-seeding party had finished their work, and the girls were gathering up the empty baskets, when Thomas Blue Dog came stalking proudly in from the bakery, with John a little way behind him.

In both hands Thomas bore with care something on a plate that steamed from under its clean napkin, and smelled—oh, so good!

Straight up to Miss Helen he marched and put the precious article in her hands.

"Mr. Darrow helped us—and we didn't fight this time!" he managed to say, and then fled, overcome with bashfulness.

The girls all came crowding around to lift the napkin; and out to the bakery floated their eager voices, crying, "It's a pie! A cherry pie for Miss Helen!"

THE BLACK BAND

Janak, the Hindu fakir, sat by the wayside under a tree, meditating. That was the business of his life; and the people who went by, seeing him so deep in thought that he did not look up at the sound of their footsteps, would say admiringly, "What a holy man he is!"

There was little else about Janak to admire. His body was smeared with ashes; his hair was so matted that no power on earth could have forced a comb through it; his finger nails were long and curving, like the claws of an enormous bird; but all these things are thought to be the marks of a holy life by the people of India.

"How little he cares for comfort or ease!" said the passer-by. "And look at the scars in his cheeks and on his shoulders! How he must have tortured himself, and how much merit he must have gained from the gods!"

And there were the ugly marks on his cheeks, which made him look so fierce. They and the scars on his shoulders were the marks of the time when he had sought to please his gods, as many worshipers in India do, by thrusting sharp spikes into his flesh as he prayed. Often he had gone about with a long iron spike run completely through both cheeks, from side to side of his face. This is thought to be very pleasing to the cruel gods of India.

But now Janak was growing old, and he sought no longer to gain merit by such tortures. They had not made him any happier; nor had he found that it gave him any satisfaction to make long pilgrimages lying on the ground and rolling over and over all the way.

Now he was content to sit beneath a tree all day long, almost believing, as the people did, that he was thinking

wonderful and holy thoughts, when he was really dozing in the shade.

But to Ratnam, his little *chela,* or disciple, Janak was the holiest man in all the world.

"If I did not look after the master," said he to himself, "he would forget to eat. He is so busy with his wonderful thoughts and holy prayers that he scarcely listens sometimes when I come to tell him that the sun is low and it is time to have supper."

Then Ratnam would take the begging bowl that lay at Janak's side and would stand close by the road; and when people saw the holy man they would drop some money or food in the bowl.

Some days there was very little, and then Ratnam did without so that his master might have more.

"It is no more than right," he would say to himself. "Were not my parents dead in the famine, and I myself starving, when Janak found me and made me his *chela?* I would starve for him any day!"

To do the old man justice, it was not selfishness that made him eat Ratnam's share as well as his own.

"I feasted well, master, while you were meditating," Ratnam would say. "I am only ashamed that, greedy as I was, I left so little for you!"

And Janak would smile and finish all that was in the bowl.

Today Janak was wider awake than usual. There had been so little to eat this time that he was not comfortable enough to doze as usual. He tried in vain to fix his mind on his prayers, and presently a puff of hot wind brought a bit of white paper fluttering to his feet.

He reached out his hand idly and picked it up. It was in his own language, and he read a few words. Strange words they were; and when he had grasped a little of

their meaning he began at the beginning and read both sides of the leaf.

"Ratnam, come here!" he called presently, and Ratnam, much surprised at being noticed, hurried to his master's side.

"This," said Janak, "is the story of a very holy man, Ratnam. I do not know where He lived, but He was much holier than I or thou, for out of a few loaves and fishes, by His prayers, He made food enough for five thousand people. Listen, while I read it to thee!"

When they had read every syllable on the sheet Ratnam began to search for more. In a short time he had gathered up six torn leaves of a pocket copy of Matthew's Gospel. It was not all there, but there were several more miracles, part of the Sermon on the Mount, and one page that told how Christ was betrayed and crucified.

Janak's wonder grew as he read.

"I have never heard anything like this," he said. "Not Rama, not Krishna, not any of our divine ones was like this Yesu. I must find someone who can tell me more of Him!"

After that Janak did not do much meditating under the tree. He went to seek somebody who could tell him how to be a follower of Yesu.

But after all, it was Ratnam who found the first one.

"My master," he said one day, hurrying to Janak in great excitement, "I have found an Englishman who says he knows about Yesu!"

Herbert Wilcox, the English tourist, whom Ratnam had captured, was half amused and scarcely at his ease when called upon to tell what he knew about the life of Christ. He had not been such a student of the Bible as made it easy for him to answer the eager questions of Janak and Ratnam.

"Yes, it's all true," he assured them. "Yes, He did wonderful things. He was the best man that ever lived. Yes, He died on the cross, as the book says."

That was about all they could get from him. After he had passed on, Ratnam, whose eyes were also alert, said to his master, "Did you see the black band he wore on his arm?"

"Yes," said Janak. "I have seen men wear those before. I think that must be the mark of a Christian—that is what he said he was, didn't he? I will be a Christian, too, and wear a black band on my arm. Then when I meet other Christians we shall know each other."

It was not long till Ratnam found a fragment of a torn black veil, and soon he and Janak were wearing what they believed to be the badge of a Christian.

"There are not many Christians about here," he complained one day to Ratnam. "Let us seek a village where there are more." So from place to place they wandered always asking for people who were Christians.

"There's the queerest old fakir out here, Doctor Prescott," said a young missionary, just before the service which he and the senior missionary were about to conduct in the little chapel of a Christian village. "He is asking for Christians. Shall I tell him to come in?"

And so Janak heard his first sermon; and after the service Doctor Prescott came to talk with him.

"Yes, I, too, am a Christian," said Janak, proudly pointing to the bands on his arm and Ratnam's.

It took some questioning to get at the truth, and some time to explain to Janak that the black band was not a mark of Christian faith.

"It is a sign that men wear," at length said Doctor Prescott, "which shows that someone they love has died."

Janak's face brightened; then he answered, "But I read in the book that my Loved One has died, so I shall wear it in memory of Him."

One Easter morning Janak stood before Doctor Prescott a different man. His hair had been cut, his long nails trimmed, and the dirt, which, he had learned was not a sign of holiness, was washed away. In a clean white garment he presented himself for baptism, with Ratnam, also white-robed and beaming, and for the first time the black bands were gone from their arms.

"My Loved One died, it is true," he said to the missionary. "But now I know He is raised from the dead, and lives forever. We will be His *chelas,* Ratnam and I."

And Doctor Prescott, with a glad heart, welcomed them to the ranks of the risen Master's true disciples.

THE INDIANS AUNT SALLIE SAW

Long, loud and shrill rose a terrible shriek from the tent in the back yard.

Aunt Sallie jumped. She had come to visit Dick and Dick's father and mother, and she had arrived just twelve hours ago.

Mother only smiled. In a moment the tent flap was pushed open and a wonderfully feathered head appeared, followed by a wriggling body in a brand new "Indian suit."

"Hello, Aunt Sallie! Did you hear my war-whoop?" inquired Dick. "Were you scared?"

"A little," confessed Aunt Sallie.

"I guess you aren't used to Indians, are you?" asked Dick, coming across the lawn and settling himself at her feet on the steps.

"I have heard a much louder whoop than that from real Indians," replied his aunt.

"When? Where? O auntie, tell me about it!" cried Dick in great excitement.

"When I was a girl," began Aunt Sallie, "my father lived for some years in Carlisle——"

"Oh, that's where the Indian school is!" said Dick, in disappointment. "I didn't mean tame Indians."

"I saw the first Indians that were ever brought there, fresh from the reservation," said Aunt Sallie. "They were anything but tame, as you would think if you had seen them."

"Had they war paint on?" Dick brightened perceptibly. "Begin at the very beginning!"

"For some time," said his aunt, "the people of the town had known that the Government was going to start a school for Indians in Carlisle. One day the news ran from house to house, 'The Indians have come!'

"Of course, we were all very curious to see them; so presently quite a crowd gathered at the buildings. These were not the present buildings of the school, but what were known as the Carlisle Barracks. They were two-story houses with balconies across the upper story. They were quite old—in fact, it was said that they were built about 1812."

"When we had the war——I know. Go on!" breathed Dick impatiently.

"The Indian girls were in the lower story of one of the barracks houses," resumed Aunt Sallie, "and the boys in the upper story. Seeing the curious crowd of townspeople, Captain Pratt, who had charge of the Indians, called to the boys to come out on the balcony.

"Presently we heard a stealthy rustling, but could see nothing at all. Our eyes were lifted above the balcony rail. No boys appeared. Suddenly a voice cried, 'Oh, look! Look at the floor!'

"What do you think those Indian boys were doing? They were not going to come out boldly in the open, among a crowd of strange pale faces. That was not their way! So they lay down flat on their chests, as though they were hiding among dead leaves and grasses, and came wriggling out like snakes across the balcony floor to peep at us between the floor and the railing.

"I think I never saw a more startling sight. Their hair was long and tangled; their eyes glared with suspicion, and across their foreheads and on their high cheek bones were brilliant streaks of paint—yellow, red and blue. They glowered at us beneath the railing like wild animals in a cage."

Dick drew a long sigh of delight.

"Wish I could have seen 'em!" he declared.

"Then Captain Pratt spoke to them," went on Aunt Sallie, "and told them that we were friends who had come to welcome them to Carlisle, and asked them to come down and let us see that they trusted the white men and were not afraid.

"Then we saw a still odder sight. The door of the barracks stood open—the girls were in hiding on the lower story, too timid even to peep out—and we could see plainly the staircase leading from the upper story. As we watched, a pair of legs appeared, then a body, and finally a head with long strings of black hair.

"The Indian boys had never seen a staircase; but they were used to scrambling up and down cliffs, and they thought the stairway was some new kind of canyon. So they were sliding down backward, holding on to the steps for dear life with hands and feet! Everyone backed down in this way, then picked himself up and came out among us.

"Up there on the balcony they had looked both sullen and stupid, but now we were to see a livelier side. When they were all gathered in the midst of the crowd, suddenly they gave the most tremendous war whoop you could possibly imagine and went dashing into the crowd in every direction. You may guess how we screamed and scattered!

"When they were through the crowd and out on the other side they turned around and stood laughing as if their sides would split. They had scared the palefaces, and they enjoyed the joke just as much as any other boys."

"Tell some more!" said Dick. "Did they always wear war-paint?"

"No, indeed," said Aunt Sallie. "One of the first things Captain Pratt did was to get them all into civilized dress. They rather liked the new clothing, but there was almost a riot when the barber came to cut their long hair."

"Of course," sympathized Dick, "they didn't want to lose their scalp-locks! Maybe they thought the barber was going to scalp them."

"Then they had to be taught to work," said Aunt Sallie. "That wasn't at all to their taste, and Captain Pratt sometimes found it hard to make them do things.

"I remember one day some of us were out at the barracks when he was trying to get them to remove three old cannon that stood on the grounds and put them in a shed some distance away.

"He came out and gave a peculiar whistle, and the boys came swarming to see what he wanted. There were some grunts of disapproval when he pointed to the cannon and then to the shed, but they took hold all together, and soon had the first one rolled away.

"There was some little delay in getting the cannon placed in the shed, and when Captain Pratt came out again the swarm of boys had melted away as by magic. Again he whistled, but only about half of them came to haul the second cannon, which they did with some difficulty.

"The third whistle brought only three or four of the boys, and we could see—as the captain was supposed not to—the boys hiding behind sheds and behind trees all over the grounds, peeping out at the cannon, but making no move to help."

"How did he get it in?" asked Dick.

"I don't know, for I couldn't stay to see," said Aunt Sallie, "but I know he taught them to work in time, for they became skillful in various kinds of trades, and made very good workmen."

"Didn't they ever go back to see their fathers and mothers?" asked Dick.

"Oh, yes; but not very often while they lived at the school, because it was such a long journey," replied Aunt Sallie. "But their people used to come and see them. Indian visitors were a common sight in Carlisle; many of the big chiefs came to visit the school, and they were gorgeous in appearance. No matter how hot the weather, they always wore their blankets. I have seen a chief stalking along the street on a sweltering day, wrapped in his blanket to the chin, and fanning himself with a feather."

Dick laughed heartily.

"Didn't they do anything else but work and study?" he asked presently.

"Oh, yes," said Aunt Sallie. "They played all sorts of games. Don't you know how famous the Carlisle Indians have become as athletes?

"After we had been away from Carlisle for some years I went back there on a visit, and attended a Sunday service at the school. It was most interesting.

"First came the orchestra—about twenty-five or thirty instruments, each carried and played by an Indian boy. It was much sweeter music than war whoops, I can tell you!

"Then I heard a tramp, tramp, tramp, regular as clockwork, and here came marching four hundred Indian boys, clean and well dressed, keeping perfect step as they filed into the chapel.

"I never saw so attentive an audience. Indians never whisper or laugh in a public gathering, much less in church. Even when we had lived in Carlisle, when some of the Indian boys came to our Sunday school, untrained as they were then, the teachers never had any trouble with

them. They would sit like statues all through the lesson, and nobody could make them talk or smile."

Dick squirmed slightly, and changed the subject.

"I bet their people didn't know them when they came home," he said. "But what I would rather see would be the real, wild Indians with their painted faces, and hear a truly war whoop! Couldn't you do one, Aunt Sallie?"

HOW CARMELA SPENT THE HOLIDAYS

The Christmas exercises were over in the little hall of the city mission. The tree was stripped of its gifts and the happy children had gone home to repeat in dark tenements the songs they had learned and show their toys and candy.

Sister Martha stood in the deserted room with Pastor Hopewell and looked after the last smiling group with tired but joyful eyes. The deaconess had worked hard to prepare and distribute the little treat, and there had been plenty for every child who came, and a few toys left over.

"It will not do to give them too much at once," she wisely said. "They will enjoy the toys more if they have just a few at a time."

Now she was about to put away the remainder for times of emergency, when some of the mission children might be sick, or a baby cry in Sunday school and refuse to be quieted without a dolly to hold or a toy horse to examine.

"Hello!" cried Mr. Hopewell suddenly. "Who's at the door? Come in, come in!"

The big eyes in the thin little face were fixed on the tree, still glistening in its tinsel.

"Is this the place," breathed a shy little voice, "where Minna Meyer got her doll?"

"Yes, yes," said the pastor heartily. "Will you come in and see our tree?"

"May I bring my family along?" questioned Carmela anxiously.

As soon as permission was given she called back into the alley beside the mission, "Come on, Martina! Come, Lisa! Come, Netta! And bring the baby with you!"

Such a shivering little procession as filed in at the door! Five small Italian girls with such wide eyes and such little, thin legs! Only the baby had a head-covering—a man's old cap—and was wrapped in a ragged shawl. The rest wore shoes with hardly enough sole to keep them on their feet; no stockings; and for all the rest of their clothing just a calico dress apiece. And it was the twenty-fifth of December!

Sister Martha caught her breath sharply as she laid her hand on Carmela's arm and felt that there was nothing but the shivering little shoulder under the calico sleeve.

"Oh, Mr. Hopewell," she whispered. "Please keep them busy with these toys, while I look for some clothing for them."

An hour later five happy little girls were going home, feeling very different from the ones who had hidden in the alley. Everyone had stockings on, and shoes with patches, but without holes. Each wore warm underclothing and some kind of a shawl, cape or coat.

"Mine is the best," said Martina proudly. "It has pockets in it to keep my hands warm. If it wasn't too big, I'd give it to the baby."

"Oh, look," said Carmela, "the baby's hood has strings to it with mittens on the end! Now her fingers won't get cold." Carmela had hidden her scanty braids under a woolen "fascinator," and each of the others had a warm hood.

Such a wonderful Christmas! Nice things for every one of them to wear, and apples and cakes and oranges; and dolls for the little ones, with a brush and comb for Carmela. And tomorrow the kind lady was coming to see them.

Sister Martha was used to the sad sights of the tenements, but she shivered more than once on her visit to Carmela's home next day.

Through narrow streets, dirty and slippery, where the snow fell only to be trampled into filth; up long flights of rickety stairs, dark as pitch, where dogs and children got under foot, and garbage pails and bundles of rags blocked the way; up into a cheerless garret, where there was scarcely a whole pane of glass, where a handful of coals smoked sullenly in a worn-out cookstove, and a drunken father sat by the table with his bottle of whisky beside him—this was where the motherless Carmela kept her little "family."

In the front room, which served as parlor and kitchen, there was a tattered mattress on the floor, which, Carmela explained, was "father's bed." The second room was unlighted and without ventilation, except such as came through an opening—too small to be called a window—leading into the air shaft that ran from top to bottom of the big building and let in nothing but cold.

"And where are your beds?" asked Sister Martha, when the girls told her that this was their sleeping room.

"Our beds?" said Martina, surprised. "Why, we never had no beds! We sleep on the floor."

"O Martina," said Carmela reproachfully, "don't forget the nice piece of old carpet Mis' Maloney give us last winter! Why, it covers all of us!" she said, displaying the tattered piece of rag carpet proudly. "It's covers, if it isn't a bed," she added.

Beds were not plentiful at the Mission, and Sister Martha had none stored away with her toys and second hand garments. But she determined Carmela's family should have some. She left the tenement with a promise from Carmela that the children would come in the evenings to the Bible school at the Mission.

For three nights Carmela and her sisters sat faithfully on the low-backed benches and heard about Christmas and the Christ-child, about Samuel and Moses and David. Then they vanished—on the very night after Sister Martha had succeeded in getting a man to carry two cheap mattresses up the rickety stairs to the cheerless back room.

"I am really disappointed," she said to Pastor Hopewell, when a week had passed and there were no further signs of Carmela's little flock. "The oldest girl seemed interested, and I thought gratitude at least would bring them for a while."

"Have patience!" said Mr. Hopewell. "Perhaps they will come back."

And that very night they did come back; not only Carmela and Martina and the other three, but two little neighbors as well.

"Where have you been, Carmela?" asked Sister Martha. "We thought you had forgotten us."

"Oh, no!" said Carmela shocked. "How could we forget, when we had our beds and all the nice things? We were keeping——" She stopped and fidgeted with the fringe of her shawl.

"Yes?" said Sister Martha encouragingly.

"Well," said Carmela at last, "you know how people say they keep the holidays after Christmas—they do just the nicest things they know for a whole week. A girl told me about it once; her sister worked for rich people."

"And you were keeping your holidays?" inquired Sister Martha. "What nice things did you do?"

"You won't laugh?" said Carmela appealingly. "And you won't be mad? I know we promised to come to the meetings, and we do like them; but every evening, when I said to my family 'How shall we keep our holidays tonight?' they would look at those grand beds, and everyone

would say, 'Let's go to bed!' You see," faltered Carmela, "we never had any beds before, and we just couldn't leave them. The nicest thing we could find to do was just to go to bed. But now we're coming every evening," she added assuringly.

And Sister Martha's eyes were moist about the lashes as she turned away to find Mr. Hopewell and tell him how Carmela and her "family" had spent their Christmas holidays.

TRUE THOMAS

A Story of the Philippines

"There are new scholars come, teacher," announced Felipe, putting his head into the room where Miss Archer sat.

"New scholars!" exclaimed the teacher of the mission school, looking up. "How am I to take new scholars when the building is full now?"

"They come very far," said Felipe. "They are of a tribe that is very wild, living away up in the mountains. They know nothing at all. But they heard of this school and how much all the scholars learn, and that the teacher lady is very kind; and they walk three, four, maybe five days, to come to our school."

Miss Archer hastened out to see the newcomers. They were truly not attractive; their clothing was scanty and very much soiled and torn; their hair was matted, and their feet were bleeding from the stones and briers on the mountainside.

There were seven of them—three boys and four girls; the oldest probably about ten years old, the youngest not more than six.

"How did your parents let you come so far?" asked Miss Archer. The little ones could not understand, but Felipe acted as interpreter.

"Our parents," replied the oldest boy, "did not care at all. They were very glad to have us come and learn at this fine place," he added with a coaxing smile. Miss Archer found it hard to resist.

"But I have no room for you here," she said.

"Teacher," said Felipe, "the boys and girls want them to stay." Sure enough all the school children were gathering around, nodding their heads and pointing to the strangers.

"But where can they sleep?" asked Miss Archer.

"We can make beds on the floor," said Felipe. "We will share our blankets with them."

"But there is nothing to feed them with," said the perplexed teacher.

"Each of us will give them a little," said Felipe, after consulting with some of the others.

"Really, Felipe," said the teacher, "I'm afraid I cannot allow that. Our rations are not more now than each of you needs in order to keep healthy and strong; and unless the people at home in America allow me more money to carry on the school, I do not see how I can take in seven more pupils."

There was a buzz of discussion among the children; then Felipe said: "They say that if you will let the children stay we will do the washing; you pay every week to have that done, and if we could save that money it would buy enough to feed them. The boys will wash the clothes and the girls will iron them. Please let these children stay, teacher! They came so far to go to school!"

After that there was nothing to do but to let the seven stay. Miss Archer sent the older children to wash the strangers and comb their tangled hair. The children from the surrounding country had mostly names borrowed from the Spanish, but these little mountaineers had native names which proved impossible for Miss Archer to pronounce. At last she gave it up in despair.

"I shall call the boys Thomas, John and Henry," she said. "The girls will be Mary, Sarah, Ruth and Grace."

The little strangers had many bad habits to unlearn. They had never been taught that it was wrong to tell what

was not true or to take what did not belong to them. Miss Archer was very patient with them, for she knew that they had never learned any better; but sometimes they tried her patience very sorely.

Thomas, as she had named the oldest boy, was particularly hard to teach. He was the leader of the three boys, and they, and sometimes the girls as well, were found in mischief which it was plain that Thomas had planned.

He was always as innocent as a kitten washing its face after drinking out of the cream pitcher.

"No, teacher, no!" he would say. "No take piece of bread from Ramon! Big bird fly down and grab it!" Or, "Thomas not put mouse on Margarita! Mouse run out of school room, jump on her back!"

His stories were so impossible that they seldom deceived anyone; but Miss Archer felt that she must teach him to be truthful, or it would do him more harm than good to get an education.

One morning the teacher came into the kitchen and found almost half the fish gone which had been prepared for breakfast. At once her suspicions flew to the little mountaineers. The little girls had no part in this, for it must have been taken in the night, and all the girls slept in a large room which could not be entered or left except through the room where Miss Archer herself slept, with the keys under her pillow.

It must have been some of the boys; yet she did not want to accuse the new boys, for she remembered that a few of the older ones had not been too well trained when they came, and might have helped in the raid. She could hardly believe that three boys had eaten the fish prepared for the breakfast of thirty children.

"All stand in line before me!" she said very gravely, when the children were ready for morning prayers. "Now,

I am going to ask each one of you a question. Felipe, did you take any fish from the kitchen last night? Ramon? Carlo? Henry?" She went down the line calling each by name.

Every boy denied it, and none with so calm a face as Thomas. Then Miss Archer declared, "Somebody has told a lie, and I am going to find out who it was! Every one of you stand here in line while Margarita and Dolores go to the boys' dormitory and *smell the beds.*"

What a change swept over the faces of the guilty ones! How did teacher know that they had feasted on the salt fish and then wiped their hands on the bed clothes?

Before the girls came back Thomas stepped from the line.

"Teacher," he said, "I stole the fish. Henry and John helped to eat them, but they did not take them; it was all my fault. Please do not punish them. I will never lie to you again, for you know everything."

And from that day Thomas did not steal, and always caught himself up if he started to tell what was not true. So changed did he become that Miss Archer took a fancy for calling him "True Thomas," after a character in a famous old ballad; and he did his best to deserve the name.

"If my work in the Philippines," she often says, "had done nothing but to bring this little boy to an understanding of truth and honesty, it would have been worth while. At first he tried to do right to please me; but now he has come to know that there is a Father in heaven who loves him better than I do, and who really does know everything. Thomas is a Christian boy now, and I have never been sorry that I made room in the school for my seven little mountaineers."

THE IDOL ON THE WALL

"I am disappointed in Premabai," said Miss Hubbard, putting on her sun-hat.

"What has become of her?" asked Miss Rollins, the other teacher in the mission school for girls. "She went home for a vacation, and I haven't seen her since."

"I haven't heard a word from her," sighed Miss Hubbard. "She was one of the brightest girls in my class, and seemed so eager to become a Christian. I hope nothing has happened to her."

"You can't tell what is going to happen, here in India," said Miss Rollins. "About the time a girl begins to learn something and to take a real interest in her work, her people decide it is time for her to get married, and off she goes!"

"If I only knew that Premabai hadn't stayed away on purpose!" said Miss Hubbard. "It's bad enough to have them kept from coming back, but it's worse to think they wouldn't care to come, after all we do to teach them something better than the native village life."

"Well, don't worry. Perhaps Premabai will be here again by the time you come back from your trip," said Miss Rollins, going to the door with her friend.

The journey across the river on which Miss Hubbard was starting was a tour of several days. Word had come to the mission that several villages on the other side had asked for day schools, and Miss Hubbard was going over to see about it and to get several former pupils of the mission, now living across the river, to interest themselves in the plan.

The second night of her trip she was sleeping in the home of one of these young women, who had married a native Christian pastor. Soon after going to bed Miss Hubbard was awakened by a sound of voices debating, and presently her hostess came to the door, saying apologetically:

"There is a girl here, Miss Hubbard, who says she must see you. I did not like to disturb you, but——"

By this time Miss Hubbard was on her feet, for she recognized the voice outside, which cried:

"Teacher, dear teacher, please let me in! They will whip me if I am not back before they find I have been out."

"Premabai!" exclaimed Miss Hubbard. "Come in, child, and tell me where you have been, and why you did not come back to school."

"My family brought me over here," said Premabai, "so that you could not find me. Oh, Miss Hubbard, I have made a dreadful mistake; but I thought I was doing right——" And the little girl began to sob.

"Sit down here, Premabai," said the teacher, "and tell me all about it. What happened when you went home for vacation?"

"I was so anxious to get home," began Premabai, "that I could hardly wait, because I wanted to tell my people all about Jesus, and how He is God over all, and the idols are no gods.

"The day after I went home, I said to my mother,

" 'Mother, why do you have that ugly old idol painted on the wall?' You see, on the wall of the western room there was painted a big image. I had seen it every day since I could remember; but it never looked so ugly and foolish to me as it did after I had seen the picture of the Good Shepherd that hangs in the school room.

"My mother was shocked; she said:

" 'My daughter, do not speak such words against the god of the house; he will hear you, and send misfortune on all of us.'

" 'But, mother,' I said, 'he is only some paint, put there with a brush; he does not hear or see, and I am not afraid of him.'

"Then I tried to tell her about the true God; but she was very much frightened, and said we would all die of cholera or some other disease, if we offended the gods. So I kept quiet; but I never helped worship the idol, and every day I hated the sight of it more.

"At last I thought to myself:

" 'If I should wipe off the idol from the wall and my people saw that no harm came to me, they would know that the idols have no power.'

"So when everyone was out watching a marriage procession, I started to wash the picture from the wall. It came off very easily; and I thought I had done a great thing, and now all my people would believe in Jesus, and I would bring them all to be baptized. I was a very foolish girl, Miss Hubbard."

Premabai stopped to wipe away the tears; then she continued:

"When my mother came in again several neighbors were with her. They came right into the room where the idol had been, and at first they looked around, as if they didn't know where they were. Then my mother saw what it was that made the room look so strange.

"At the same moment one of the women caught sight of the paint-stained rag in my hand and began to scream:

" 'The anger of the gods is upon us! This is what comes of sending your daughter to the Christian school!'

"Then they ran out, screaming and tearing their hair. My mother was so frightened she could not move, but I

fastened the door. Soon a crowd was gathered outside; they could not get in, but they threw stones and mud, and called us terrible names.

"When my father came home that evening they caught him, and beat him so badly that he was not able to walk. When he found out what it was all about he promised the people that I should never go back to the school.

"But nobody would come into our house, because the god was gone from it, and it would be unlucky. The neighbors cried bad names whenever they saw us; and at last my father said:

" 'We must move to another village. The holidays are over, and the missionaries may come after Premabai, to see why she has not returned. We have no friends here, and may be attacked again if we stay. Let us move to the other side of the river; for it is death to us and to the teacher if she comes here looking for Premabai.'

"So we came over here; and when I knew you were in the village, I ran away to tell you why I did not come back."

Premabai stopped, and the tears fell fast. The teacher stroked her bent head very lovingly; presently she said:

"When I first came to India, Premabai, I made the same mistake that you did."

Premabai's head was raised, and her tearful eyes grew wide with astonishment.

"Yes," said Miss Hubbard, "let me tell you what I did. I thought, like you, that all we had to do was to take away the idols, and people would worship the true God.

"So one day, when I was in a part of the country where there were many temples, I went into one, and took away a stone idol, so heavy that I could hardly carry it. It happened that nobody saw me, and I got safely away with it to the house where the other missionaries were.

"They were very much frightened when they saw what I had done. They knew that it was too dangerous to try to put it back; so they helped me to hide it, and we got away from the place as fast as possible. Nobody ever knew who took it, and we put it in a box and sent it away. My mother has it now, in her home far across the sea.

"I had not kept a single person from believing in idols, and I had put all of us in great danger. Since then I have learned that we must begin with the hearts of the people and teach them first to love Jesus, and then they will give up the idols of their own accord."

Premabai had listened with breathless interest. It was a comfort to know that her teacher had once made the same mistake she had made.

"But I can never come back to the school," she said, sadly.

"You can be a little missionary in your own home, dear Premabai," said Miss Hubbard. "Your people will surely see how happy and kind Jesus makes His people if you try to follow Him. Good night now, dear child, and God bless you!"

And Premabai was gone, like a little shadow slipping away into the darkness.

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